THE WHITE EAGLE OF POLAND

E. F. BENSON

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THE WHITE EAGLE OF POLAND
CRESCENT AND IRON CROSS
THE FREAKS OF MAYFAIR
THE TORTOISE
MICHAEL
THE OAKLEYITES
DAVID BLAIZE
ARUNDEL

GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
NEW YORK

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BY

E. F. BENSON

AUTHOR OF "CRESCENT AND IRON CROSS,"
"THE FREAKS OF MAYFAIR,"
ETC.

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PREFACE

This book is divided into two parts, the first of which is mainly concerned with the reconstruction of a Polish State after the victorious close of our war against the Central Empires, a policy to which the Governments of the Powers of the Entente, including America, have repeatedly given expression both in independent and in joint utterances. In this part an attempt is made to set forth how Poland will form an indispensable link in the cordon of free states which will for all time prevent Germany from penetrating Eastwards at will, absorbing the countries through which she eats her way until she lays hands on Egypt and India, and there follows on the disintegration of the British Empire her domination of the world.

To avert this, it is necessary that, among other provisions, there shall be established a powerful Polish State, living in harmony with Russia (in whatever form Russia will emerge from chaos) and constituting a permanent barrier against the Teutonic power on its West. It is vital to the peace of the world for which the Entente is fight-

ing that Poland, once split up by the partitions, should be reunited and independent again, and thus the aim of the Entente is identical with the aspirations of Polish patriots. It is safe to say that no more gigantic and complicated question has ever arisen in international politics, but it is hoped that the reader may find in this part of the book some statement of the problem which will enable him to realize what the German menace Eastwards means, and how it may be checked.

Chapter II of this part of the book deals with the partitions of Poland which took place at the end of the 18th century, so that the reader may understand not only how such a restoration of Poland is necessary for the peace of the world, but how the Polish nation, on the grounds that nationalities have a right to separate and independent existence, claims the fulfilment of one of the avowed aims of the Entente, and the righting of an intolerable injustice.

Part II deals with the internal conditions of the Russian Kingdom of Poland from the outbreak of the war in August, 1914, down to (roughly) the end of February, 1918, and is mainly based on such information as has reached England from Polish, German, Austrian and Russian sources. Accounts of the happenings there since the coun-

try has been occupied by the enemy are sometimes conflicting, for information derived from Polish sources does not invariably tally with the German or Austrian view of a question, but, as a rule, subsequent news has disentangled the truth.

These sections and those dealing with the various proposed "solutions" of the Polish question as set forth by the occupying powers, will, it is feared, be found difficult to follow, and while craving indulgence for any failure to present the case lucidly, the writer ventures to remind his readers that, where a question is in itself complicated, no lucidity of treatment can make it easy of comprehension. All he has hoped to avoid is confusion.

Statistics with regard to the populations of Poland, Lithuania, etc., are, since the country has been in the enemy's hands, difficult to verify, and in most cases the figures given are pre-war figures, which must be taken as being only approximately true.

Two maps will be found at the end of the book. By consulting the first of these the reader will realize the extent of the ancient republic of Poland before the partitions, and the nationalities of which it was composed: the second represents Poland as it was in 1914, when shared up between Germany, Austria and Russia.

Finally my best thanks are due to the officials of various Government departments and to the representatives of the Polish National Committee in London and Paris for the information with which they have so generously furnished me. Without that it would have been impossible to present, however faintly, the main lines of what is perhaps the most intricate problem that will arise when the Powers of the Entente are at length completely victorious over the Central Empires.

E. F. Benson.

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PART I

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF POLAND

PART I

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF POLAND

CHAPTER I

Poland and Mittel-Europa

At the beginning of the war it is probable that few people of average education had any very accurate idea even of the place which the Kingdom of Poland occupies on the map of Europe, and to the English mind it but belonged to that nebulous system of geographical expressions such as Bohemia, Galicia or Serbia, indefinite, shadowy states towards the East of Europe, concerning which it was necessary to consult an atlas. Fewer still knew anything about its past history or its present condition, beyond, perhaps, that it was connected with Russia, since they mildly remembered that the Tsar of all the Russias was also King of Poland, much as the German Emperor was also King of Prussia. And fewest of all even among

the skilled and well-informed augurs of political omens saw or guessed that before the war was over Poland would have acquired so huge a significance as it, and the problems connected with it, imply to-day. For to-day the majority of far-seeing and large-minded statesmen, both in England and the Allied countries, are perfectly well aware that the eventual solution of the question of Poland, which at present is in joint German and Austrian occupation, will supply a fair and adequate criterion as to which group of belligerents may be considered to have won the European war. Germany knows that no less well than we, and though her armies might be beaten in the field, and though she might be compelled to accept a peace without other annexations, coupled with the retrocession of Alsace and Lorraine to France, with the restoration of Belgium and the re-establishment of Serbia, if she could make an arrangement about Poland and the problems of her eastward expansion which are bound up with it satisfactory to her own statesmen, she would be entitled to consider herself at any rate undefeated. For the economic and political victory she would have won would fully compensate for a disaster to her arms, and in ten years or less she could be the aggressor in another war which would in all

probability leave her mistress of the world. This may sound an exaggerated menace, but it is in truth a sober and considered statement of fact, for the policy known as the Mittel-Europa policy would have achieved a signal victory of supreme importance which would be certain to lead to further success and the ultimate realization of its complete aims. Intimately bound up with the destiny of Poland is that of Bohemia: this does not, however, except marginally, fall within the scope of this book.

Broadly speaking, there are two parties in Germany which by different methods seek the attainment of world-power. They are in harmony with each other in that each cordially approves of the other's policy as an auxiliary of its own. The Pan-German party seek the expansion of the German Empire and the overthrow of the British primarily by conquest and annexation westward, while the Mittel-Europa party (with Hindenburg to help) seek the same expansion and the same overthrow by an easterly progression. Thus the Pan-Germans proclaim as a sine-qua-non of peace-terms the retention of Antwerp and of Alsace and Lorraine by the Central Powers (in other words, Germany), and the reduction of Belgium, under the guise of a German-protected autonomy, to the

position of a German province. The Mittel-Europa party, on the other hand, aim at the expansion and extension of German "spheres of interest" (or whatever meiosis they care to adopt as synonymous with the simpler word "conquest") eastward, hoping to bring about the realisation of the same "far-off event" by the direct menace to Egypt and India. Already they have achieved much, and not only is it necessary for the prosperity and even the existence of the British Empire that their work in this direction should be checked, but much that they have done must certainly be undone again before security against universal German domination can return to the world. As Mr. L. B. Namier has admirably said: "The old continental dream of Napoleon—an overland route into Asia—has become the cardinal issue of the war." *

This expansion of Germany eastwards by means of "peaceful penetration" had made great strides before the outbreak of the European war, as the events of the war soon discovered for us. The chaos and annihilation of Russia as a Power, for instance, has not been due solely to the socialistic upheaval which finally produced its impotence, and indeed that upheaval itself was largely brought

* "The Case of Bohemia," by L. B. Namier, p. 3.

about by the peaceful penetration of German gold. But apart from that, German intrigue and the disintegrating acid of German influence had already eaten the sap out of the Empire of the Tsars, and the fall of the Imperial family, the fall of Kerensky, and the complete anarchy produced by the Bolsheviks were all as much due to German machinations as to the inherent instability of that ricketty colossus, the Russian Empire. In Russia, Germany's programme, in accordance with the policy of Mittel-Europa, has been to sow the seeds of self-destruction in foreign fields, and when that crop was reaped to fertilize them afresh with vigorous Teutonic grain. A strong efficient Russia would always have been a barrier to her progress; for Russia, mistress of herself and her millions, and competent to develop her inexhaustible riches of men and material, would have been fatal to Germany's unlimited expansion eastwards. Whether or no she has made a huge miscalculation, and in helping to create the anarchy of Bolshevism has raised a Frankenstein monster which she is ununable to control, and which may penetrate to the heart of Germany herself, whither the Russian legions were unable to force a way, is a question that is now troubling the shrewdest brains in

Berlin, and is likely to trouble them more before they have framed a reassuring answer.

A strong Russia, then, was the last thing that Germany desired, for she could not possibly hope to use the strength and stability of Russia for her own ends, and therefore Russia's strength was a barrier to her advance. But (still tracing the policy of the Mittel-Europa party) her method with regard to Turkey was precisely the opposite to her Russian programme. The sick man (to adopt Lord Aberdeen's obsolete and misleading phrase) could never seriously threaten the advance of her plans, and while the rest of the European powers were propping up the throne of Abdul-Hamid and, subsequently, the Camorra of the Young Turks, for fear of the confusion and quarrelling that would follow on the disintegration of the Turkish Empire, Germany, with a livelier foresight and an experter medical skill, was, as it were, transfusing her own blood into the veins of the patient. What she wanted was not a weak Turkey, but a strong Turkey who should be hers, and from the earliest days of the reign of the present Emperor, Wilhelm II, until to-day, she has been strengthening the hands of the Turk, knowing that the strength with which she supplied him was being converted back into her own.

Like, it is true, seeks like, and the psychical affinity of Turk and German was very clearly shewn in their respective treatments of Armenians and Belgians, but there was more than brotherly sympathy in the hand-clasp of Berlin and Constantinople. To-day the Sultan writhes in the famous iron grip of the hand that sought his so cordially.

It is worth while, with the object of understanding the policy of Mittel-Europa, to survey quite briefly its dealings with Turkey, dictated with the view of turning Turkey, as Germany has now completely done, into a German province, not less dependent on her and her armies than is the kingdom of Hanover or Bavaria. The merchant of Bremen knows very well that his prosperity is bound up with the military efficiency of the Fatherland, and in exactly the same way Talaat and Enver and the Sultan (who once was the shadow of God, and is now the shadow of Wilhelm II) know that unless the victory in the present war rests with the German arms, the ill-knit Ottoman Empire, in which the majority of the populations consists not of Turks but of alien races, will be in large measure taken from them by the dispositions of the Allies, who have pledged themselves to free those peoples from the unspeakable tyranny of the Turk. The Sultan by now understands, too, that

his empire has already become a vassal state of Germany, who permits him to manage its internal affairs only in so far as they concern massacres and reforms of that description. In other respects, all Turkish matters, military, naval, economical, educational and financial, are in German hands. And this result is the work of the Mittel-Europa policy, part of the projected scheme.

The Emperor Wilhelm II paid a memorable visit to Abdul-Hamid not long after the Armenian massacres of 1895, and on that occasion ineffectually tried to gain his consent to a scheme for German colonisation of the lands depopulated by the massacres. This time he plucked at a fruit that was out of reach, and it was not till after the deposition of Abdul-Hamid by the Young Turk party that the loaded bough began to droop into accessibility. Germany wanted a strong Turkey, and while her peaceful penetration prospered and she got Turkish concessions, and proceeded apace with the Bagdad railway, her officers were busy introducing Prussian thoroughness into the ramshackle organisation of the Turkish army. Though the Young Turk movement momentarily upset her plans, she soon saw the wisdom of allying herself, heart and soul, with it, and continued her support when it was merged in the Nationalist

movement, penetrating all the time, and within a few days of the outbreak of war in 1914, Enver Pasha returned to Constantinople from Berlin with a Germano-Turkish treaty in his pocket. By the end of October the mobilization of the Turkish armies was complete, and our diplomatic relations with Turkey were severed. From that day to this, Germany has never halted for a moment in her exploitation of Turkey for her own ends, ends concerned not only with the military conduct of the war, but with the ultimate objective of the Mittel-Europa policy. While she has immensely increased Turkey's resources, she has also reduced the Ottoman Empire to a state of complete bankruptcy by the simple expedient of advancing paper money, and bargaining for its repayment after the end of the war in gold. And not one penny of that paper money has benefited Turkey in any way, for it has all been spent in the raising of troops to fight for Germany, and in industrial schemes of which the produce is used for the internal and the military needs of Germany. There are irrigation works at Adana which greatly increase the cereals that supply the Central Empires: there are thousands of acres under beet-cultivation at Konia, the sugar from which goes to Germany. There are training schools and boy-

scout establishments all over the empire which raise men for the armies that Germany employs, there are wireless stations that send her messages, and submarine bases that harbour her pirate-boats. The Taurus tunnel on the Berlin-Bagdad railway has been finished, hundreds of miles of other railways have been opened up, others, under German efficiency, have been made to pay substantial dividends, while the labour and materials necessary for these exploitations have been discharged by German paper lent to Turkey and to be repaid in gold. And though such part of the native populations as is not of use to Germany may be starving, Turkey's value as a military, an industrial, and an economic asset is vastly greater to-day than it ever has been, for Germany has set the Ottoman house in order since it is an annexe in the plans of her own world-wide palace, and Anatolian soldiers are a wheel in the great German war-machine, which shall Juggernaut its way over the entire globe.

It may reasonably be asked what induced Turkey to give over into German hands all that constitutes a nation's independence, and the answer is the "attractive proposition" which Germany laid before her. This bait which she has so temptingly dangled before the rulers of the Otto-

man Empire in order to persuade them to let her raise men and materials to fight her battles for her is the vision of an immensely expanded Ottoman Empire which shall have its capital at Constantinople. The book written by Tekin Alp, under which pseudonym nestles a Salonica Jew (I believe called Cohen), admirably sets this forth. His work, entitled "Turks and the Pan-Turkish Ideal," published in 1915, and distributed broadcast over the Ottoman Empire as German propaganda, shews us into what dreamings have the Turks been hypnotised. All Moslem peoples are to be comprised in this re-united Turkey, which will include the whole of Egypt as far as Victoria Nyanza, Arabia, Persia, the greater part of India, the littoral of the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Aral Sea. All this will be Turkey's, if Turkey will prosecute Germany's war to its victorious close. But should she detach herself or should the Allies be victorious, she knows what to expect; Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Mesopotamia, will be plucked from her, and until lately (January, 1918) the Allies had proclaimed that they would expel her from Europe altogether. It was "up to her" to choose, and she chose. But, if she only knew it, not only will she never get, in the event of Germany's victory, one yard of all those

territories that are so succulently dangled in front of her, but under German penetration she has already lost the last remnants of her Empire. Should Germany be victorious, Turkey will no longer exist: there will be but a new Germany in Europe and a new Germany in Asia, where Turkey once was. Germany will not technically have annexed it, since no doubt there will still be a Sultan in Constantinople. But none the less it will be hers, and its acquisition will be a stout volume, bound like a prize, in the records of the Mittel-Europa policy. For Turkey will, in other words, form part of the great high-road which Germany is constructing (with paper money to be repaid in gold) to lead from Berlin to Bombay. As for the value of German promises with regard to the augmented Empire, Turkey is already beginning to learn something, for though the littoral of the Black Sea was promised her, she has lately been very smartly snubbed for venturing to intrude herself in affairs concerning the Crimea.

Now, far-distant as Turkey is from mid-Europe, Germany's policy with regard to her is an integral and essential part of the Mittel-Europa scheme. It is precisely that which some of our Western politicians have completely missed. Because Turkey is not the immediate link in the chain that

is designed to connect Berlin with Egypt and India, they think that it has nothing to do with that chain, and will find out to the infinite cost of the country whose eyes and intelligence they are supposed to be, that once given that Germany succeeds in obtaining a peace based on the apparent reasonableness of the formula "no annexations," she will by her "spheres of influence" in Bulgaria, Roumania, the Ukraine, and Turkey, have pushed her frontiers to the edge of the Persian Gulf. There is nothing that Mittel-Europa politicians would like better than to conclude a peace to-day on the basis of no annexations, for, technically, she has not annexed the Ottoman Empire (any more than she has annexed Poland, to whom she has several times granted "independence"). But the effect would be that while we should have to clear out of Mesopotamia and Palestine, we should leave her in literal no less than in virtual possession of the lands between the Sea of Marmora and the Persian Gulf. That is what "no annexation" means to Germany, and on such a basis that is what she has already acquired, and if the unfathomable ignorance of certain sections of the English press gives any indication of the ignorance of the nation with regard to Turkey, its ignorance in the event of a peace

at all in agreement with German ideas would be very speedily instructed. Those who maintain that Turkey is a nation of peaceful and gentlemanly agriculturists, harassed in the past by the unwarrantable aggression of Russia, and now desirous only of being left to live a calm and Arcadian existence, are merely not aware that Turkey at the present time has no existence except as a military province of Germany, an acquisition of the very astute politicians of the Mittel-Europa school, who have hoodwinked them as completely as they have hoodwinked Turkey itself. Without for a moment suggesting that these blunt arrows for Turkey's defence have been supplied by Germany, it is at least reasonable to be amazed at the confidence with which a guileless Grub-street bowman faces the triumphant advance of the Central Empires.

Turkey, then, at the present moment, so far from being a bar to the advance of Mittel-Europeanism, is but a forged link in its chain, if the doctrine of "no annexation" is accepted. Russia has ceased to be able to resist the explosions of internal trouble, far less to oppose a front to attack from without (indeed, she is more like a squib that lies smouldering and may explode anywhere, than a light that shines), and the question immediately

confronts the Statesmen of the West as to how any dam can be erected which shall check the otherwise inevitable inundation of the German waters eastwards. No nonsense was so refined and distilled as that which saw in Turkey even the foetus of a nation that could resist the German advance, for it is on Germany that its misplaced hopes of future existence depend. That these hopes will never be realised if once the doctrine of "no annexations" is accepted, is of course obvious to any one who looks at all steadily at the situation or has "heard tell" of Mittel-Europa. But then some people have not. They at least escape the danger of a little knowledge, since that little has not been granted to them.

Meantime the Eastward expansion of Mittel-Europa has scored a huge success in the Ukrainian peace, for the Ukraine will as surely be put away in the great German pocket (that receptacle that aims at pouching the whole world) as Turkey has been, if Germany emerges from the war in a position to consolidate her easterly acquisitions, and weld them into the Mittel-Europa chain. The Black Sea, according to her programme, must become a German lake, and already she sees in her victory over Roumania a further important link in the fetters which if one attached to Eastern Eur-

ope can never be unshackled. In the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of Feb. 27, 1918, she jingles a fresh handful of these which ought to make any one capable of thought pause and consider. It is a typical piece of Mittel-Europa propaganda, the sort of thing which appears constantly in the press of the Central Empires, and it is good for English readers to know what they are talking about over there.

The article in question, clearly inspired, begins as the statement of German schemes usually begins, benignly enough, and dreamily proposes that the Dobrudscha might possibly be given to Bulgaria as a reward for her military exertions, and that Rumania might be compensated (*pace* the Ukraine) with the south of Bessarabia. These two territories, of course, embrace the mouth of the Danube. Then, less dreamily, it awakes to the fact that German interests are owed a Germano-protected region at the mouth of the Danube, for the Danube rises in German soil, and Germany has a further claim on territory at its mouth, since the conquest of the Dobrudscha was largely due to German arms, and "in political life it is always a mistake to exercise liberality without seeing that you get something for it." Germany must there-

fore reconsider her first plan of giving the Dobrudscha in its entirety to Bulgaria.

The argument is now broad awake. It finds that on ethnological grounds Germany has a right to claim territory in the Dobrudscha, because among the 300,000 inhabitants of that district there are at least 10,000 German colonists. Germany therefore is entitled (on the principle she has always advocated of no annexation but the national right to national territory) to one-thirtieth of the acreage of the Dobrudscha. That will perfectly content her, and she claims a fraction of her one-thirtieth at the mouth of the Danube. On similar grounds she claims a similar footing in Bessarabia (otherwise Rumania) and takes her acres exactly opposite, on the other bank of the Danube. She is still below the estimate of her proper percentage of territory, and so our article alludes to a convenient island in the Black Sea called Schlangeisel, which is 50 kilometres from the mouth of the Danube, and that she likewise earmarks. There is a poetic suitableness in her getting this little island, for the article naively observes that Schlangeisel at the mouth of the Danube quaintly corresponds to Heligoland at the mouth of the Elbe.

Now the foregoing is a typical example of Ger-

man reasoning, and it is allowable to wonder whether it even cares to deceive or is not rather a deliberate irony. In virtue of her German colonists, Germany is entitled to one-thirtieth of the Dobrudscha, and claims some paltry acres of this at the mouth of the Danube. A similar claim is advanced with regard to the other bank, and thus by judicious selection of her acreage Germany obtains precisely all she wants, i.e., control of the Danube, because she has a certain number of German colonists in the Dobrudscha; and to complete the acreage due to her she adds this convenient Schlangeisel. By a similar reasoning she might claim a few square miles of Great Britain in virtue of German residents there, and select for those few miles the city of London, or perhaps the harbours of Dover, Liverpool and Southampton . . . It is faintly possible that this soberly-propounded German scheme may induce a more public comprehension of what Mittel-Europa stands for.

But the people who had never heard of Poland in the year 1914 must four years later be surprised at the frequency with which they have since then heard of it in the pronouncements of the Governments of the Entente. Again and again official statements about the objects for which the Allies

are fighting, since the famous and unfortunately still-born proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicholas during the first fortnight of the war, have alluded to the Independence of a united Poland as one of the conditions on which the treaty of peace shall be based. Not unreasonably the public has asked "What has the war got to do with Poland?" But that a peace which postulates an independent and united existence for Poland is one of the irreducible minima of the Allies cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader. For beginning with the first pronouncement of the Grand Duke Nicholas, France by the mouths of MM. Clemenceau, Pichon and Ribot,* Italy by the mouth of Sig. Orlando, America by the mouth of Mr. Wilson, and England by the mouth of Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Lloyd George, and above all Mr. Balfour, have unanimously insisted on the independence of Poland and the reconstruction of the Polish State as an essential part of the aims of the Allies. To emphasize and unify these separate pronounce-

* M. Ribot's pronouncement, less well-known than that of other spokesmen, of the aims of the Entente, was in answer to a message from the Polish Congress in Moscow, in August, 1917. In it he greeted the re-construction of Polish independence, and the re-uniting up to the shores of the Baltic Sea, under the sovereignty of the Polish State, of all the Polish lands.

ments, the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France and Italy jointly declared, on June 3, 1918, that "The creation of a united and independent Polish State, with free access to the sea, constitutes one of the conditions of a solid and just peace, and of the rule of right in Europe."

England and France, and subsequently Italy and America, have all reiterated the same demand with a firmness that has never varied, although Poland had not been an independent country wantonly overrun by the armies of the Central Empires. For over a hundred years Poland had been a dismembered kingdom, part of which belonged to the Tsar, part to the German, part to the Austrian Empire, and yet the course of the war has caused all the allied countries in turn to demand and to reiterate their demand for the independence of Poland. That Poland had many friends in these countries who still regarded the partition she suffered in the 18th century, when her territory was divided between Prussia, Austria and Russia was a monstrous injustice, that there were many who regarded the confirmation of those partitions at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 as a crime of international import, is perfectly true, but it could not be (nor was it) merely the reparation of an ancient wrong on which the

Allies so strenuously and repeatedly insisted. They demanded this, one and all, not primarily as a belated act of justice, nor, perhaps, primarily as the right of nations to a national existence, but as a measure of future defence against Germany, for Poland is a vitally essential part of the breakwater which they must erect against the hammerings of the Mittel-Europa billows. Without such a breakwater, without such a wall against the encroachments of the hungriest sea that ever beat upon a coast, the world will undoubtedly be battered into wreckage, and eventually be submerged. Even as at the end of the Gotterdämmerung the Rhine rises in flood, and Walhalla is consumed with fire, even so will the tide of German domination spread over the world, and the free nations and the palaces of civilisation will be burned in the hell-fire of Prussian militarism.

CHAPTER II

Poland under the Partitions

The claims of the Poles themselves to be re-united into an independent kingdom rest on historical and ethnographical grounds which it is necessary to state briefly in order that these claims may be appreciated and understood. Little as they or the basis on which they rest are known in England, it is the duty of the Allies, so the champions of Polish union and independence assert, to recognise and act on them, since they have repeatedly insisted on the rights of all nations to their national territory. The Allies for instance demand the retrocession of Alsace and Lorraine to France, although the present possession of those provinces by Germany is a matter altogether outside the present war. But those provinces, plucked from France in 1870 are rightfully French, and must be re-united to France just as certainly as Belgium must be given back to the Belgians. In the same way, they contend, there are certain provinces in Germany, Austria and

Russia, which for historical and ethnographical reasons must be united and restored to form an independent Kingdom of Poland. They are inhabited by a Polish population, which is quite distinct from the various nations who have partitioned its territories among themselves, and the fact that Poland has suffered so long under this wrongful appropriation which was finally confirmed more than a century ago does not abrogate or dilute the justice of the claim. A national injustice does not lapse with the mere passage of time, if present conditions still render it unjust. It cannot, like a right of way, be established and legalized by mere usage. And this particular injustice has not lapsed, because the territories of ancient Poland, now for more than a hundred years divided among the ambient powers, are for the most part still Polish in blood, in language, in sentiment, and in religion. The Polish race has neither died out, nor has it been merged in the blood of the nations who have appropriated its territory. It exists to-day more numerous and more conscious of its national existence than ever before. Among other symptoms of this we may note the fact that apart from what is known as the Golden age of Polish literature in the 16th Century; the whole of Poland's artistic and lit-

erary achievements have blossomed after the partition.

Briefly then the historical grounds on which these claims rest are as follows; they are matters of fact, not of theory or political expediency, and as far as they go are indisputable. Up to the year 1772 when the first partition of Poland occurred it was a state of great extent with a sea-board on the Baltic, and a united realm, embracing not only what is now known as the Kingdom of Poland in Russia, but stretching eastwards as far as the Dnieper, and including the north-west and south-west provinces of Russia, i.e., the governments of Kovno, Vilna, Grodno, Minsk, Mohileff, Vitebsk, Volhynia, Podolia, Kieff.* In Austria-Hungary

* The town of Kieff itself was not Polish in 1772.

it included Galicia and originally Austrian Silesia (Teschen); in Germany, so-called Royal Prussia (West Prussia and Ermland) and Posen. The whole course of the Vistula lay within its frontiers from its rise in the Carpathians to its debouchment at Dantzig, which was a Polish port. East Prussia also had been originally a fief of Poland, and the Hohenzollerns of Brandenburg vassals of its king. Early in the 17th century, however (1611), when Sigismund III was on the Polish throne, East Prussia ceased to pay its

tribute-money and Poland was in too weak a state to enforce it. From that date therefore, until the partitions Eastern Prussia was an island, so to speak, in Poland, severed by the Polish territory on the Vistula from Brandenburg.

For some century and a half before the first partition of Poland in 1772, the country had been weakly governed, and, as to-day, was split up by many internal antagonisms, sedulously nourished and fostered by Germany. This no doubt contributed to her incapacity for a vigorous national existence, but what really decided her fate, was the international condition of Europe at the epoch when the partitions were made. England and France to whose interests it was then to prevent the partitions, which as we can see now, were the germ which has since developed into the Mittel-Europa policy, were strongly antagonistic, and Frederick the Great, who was the prime mover in the partition of 1772 was England's ally. Thus the possible interference of the Western Powers in this partition was removed. On the other side of Poland was Russia, who for the time being made common cause with Prussia, and secured her own share. The two following partitions were contemporaneous with the disorganization caused by the French Revolution, and by them Poland, as a

nation, completely disappeared from the map of Europe. Then followed the Napoleonic wars, in which for a time Russia was in extreme peril, and it is highly interesting to note that even as in 1914 when Russia was in peril from German arms, Polish reunion was promised by the Grand Duke Nicholas, so, when the French peril threatened Russia, a hundred years before, Prince Michael Oginski in 1802 issued a proclamation to Poland signed by Alexander I. strangely similar to that of the Grand Duke Nicholas speaking with the authority of Nicholas II. Yet perhaps there is little strangeness about it, for similar circumstances evoked it. It ran as follows:

> "Poles! I, as at the head of a nation which, like yourselves is descended from the valiant Slavs, as one who has sworn to fight to the last drop of blood for the integrity of my country, for its honour and independence, and as chief of the Army . . . as a monarch full of desire that Poland should form a sure bulwark for Russia, I hereby declare before heaven and earth that I will rebuild and restore the Kingdom of Poland, and calling forth the aid of Almighty God, I put on my head the Polish crown, a separate crown, but

through my person connected with the Russian empire . . . and on that basis I will rule, govern and cooperate with you to secure and establish your happiness."

These were fair promises, but Poland, hereby completing her ruin, allied herself to Napoleon, and when in 1815 the Congress of Vienna met, it confirmed the partition. Prussia was formally granted such part of the Ancient state of Poland as is still hers, Austria obtained Galicia, and Russia the rest, and from that year till to-day Poland has been a nation without one yard of territory of its own, but has preserved its national language, its national sentiment, and its national religion, which is Roman Catholic. Thus it remained until, immediately after the outbreak of the present war, the Grand Duke Nicholas proclaimed once more that the territories of Poland, split up between the warring nations should be reunited. But for the one remaining year in which Poland was in possession of Russia, the Government took no single step to redeem the promise then made, nor exerted themselves to convince the Poles of their sincerity. Subsequently we shall see in more detail what purpose lay behind that promise, and estimate its real value.

During these ninety-nine years, from the Congress of Vienna up to the outbreak of the European war, the inhabitants of the dismembered Poland, shared up between Germany, Austria and Russia suffered diverse treatment at the hands of the annexing Powers. They were promised at the Congress that they should enjoy independent political organizations, certain national rights and certain economical privileges, including, for instance, free navigation of the whole course of the Vistula. These promises were variously interpreted by the three nations in whose hands it was placed to carry them out, and as might be expected, the fulfilment of them was strongly coloured by the national characteristics of their interpreters. In order to understand the feelings of the Poles at large on the partition of their people among three different nations, it is necessary to recount briefly the treatment they experienced at the hands of each.

From 1815 to 1830 the inhabitants of that part of Poland which fell to Prussia's share had nothing to complain of except the outrage of the act of annexation itself. They had a Polish regent, Prince Anthony Radziwill, the possession and authority of the Polish nobles was upheld, their religion was respected and government posts were

given to them. The Polish language was taught in schools, and in the administration of the country it was used equally with German. But in 1830 occurred the Polish revolution in the Kingdom of Poland, which, by the partition, went to Russia, and for fear of a similar insurrection, the liberal policy of Prussia was changed for a far more rigid Germanization. Prince Radziwill was replaced by a German, Flottvell, who was made President of the Duchy of Posen.

With the object of smothering the national spirit, the power of the Polish nobility and clergy was curtailed, the German language began to take the place of Polish in schools and public business, special encouragements were given to Prussian settlers in the country, and the Polish officials were replaced by Prussians. For a while under Frederick William IV. (1840) a more liberal policy was pursued, but an insurrectionary movement in 1848 caused to be administered to the Poles a redoubled dose of Germanization. This continued to be the fixed policy of Bismarck, who avowedly did all he could to stamp out any sense of national existence in the Poles, and to absorb them in his work of uniting Germany. Religion and language are two of the strongest ties which hold together those of the same blood, and Bis-

marck set to work to loosen these, even as did the Young Turks when they ordered that a translation into Turkish should be made of the Koran, to be used in mosques, and that the prayer for the Caliphate should be recited no longer in Arabic.* Polish bishops were imprisoned, church-schools and charitable institutions managed by the clergy were closed, endowments were confiscated, and parishes deprived of their pastors. The tie of language was similarly dissolved, and between 1870 and 1874 Polish was no longer permitted to be taught in second-grade schools, and German took its place, so that the next generation it was hoped, would grow up without any literary knowledge, at any rate, of their own tongue. German was similarly made the sole official language, and the whole of the administration of the country, legal and political, was carried on in that tongue. Simultaneously Poles were prohibited from holding any government post, and the names of Polish towns were Germanized.

The Polish population, as was found by the census of 1880, was increasing more rapidly than

* Bismarck's policy with regard to this continues to this day, for as late as 1917 there was a strong protest made by Germans in Posen against religion even being taught to Polish children in their native tongue.

the German in Prussian Poland, and fresh steps were necessary for its suppression. All Poles, subjects of Austria and Russia, were therefore expelled from Prussian Poland, and in 1886 Prussia voted the sum of 100 million marks for the purchase of land from Polish proprietors, and the settlement on these lands of Germans. Next year the complete elimination of the Polish language from all schools was effected and German was made the only language for religious instruction of Polish children. With the dismissal of Bismarck in 1890 the rigidity of these restrictions was relaxed for a few years, but in 1894 an even more active propaganda for the Germanization of Prussian Poland was organized by the "Ostmarken Verein," or Hakatist Association (so called after the initials of its founders Hannemann, Kennemann, and Tiedemann). Another 100 million marks was voted in the Prussian Diet for the purchase of Polish lands and the settlement thereon of German Colonists, and these were introduced into villages in solid blocks with their mayor and their Protestant church. By the aid of the state grants these settlers acquired their land at ludicrously low prices, but were not permitted to part with it again to Polish proprietors, and a couple more regulations rounded off the gen-

eral policy, the total effect of which was to forbid Poles either to acquire land or to erect houses. A further grant of 125,000,000 marks was voted in 1908 for fresh acquisition of land and the establishment of German settlers. Territorially the result of these measures was entirely satisfactory from a German point of view, for in 1912, a quarter of the whole territory nationally Polish and inhabited by Poles was owned by Germany.

But neither these restrictions and prohibitions nor Bismarck's declared policy directed against the destruction of Polish nationality have been able to render moribund the inherent vitality of this nation, or to extinguish the flame of its individual life. The Prussian Poles organized against the hostility of the Ostmarken Verein a system of defence for their land, their language, and their stability, and if we take for consideration a series of years, say from 1870 to 1900, we find that they developed national banking corporations in such perfection that they were declared by German economists to constitute an internal peril. Similarly in spite of legislation the land in Polish hands was larger at the end of that period than at the beginning, while, most significant of all, the population of Poles in Prussian Poland increased more rapidly than that of the nation

that aimed at submerging them. The fact had already been disclosed by the German census of 1880, and by 1900 the percentage of Germans in Posen had decreased from being 45 per cent. of the whole population to 38 per cent. National consciousness and like force alike proved themselves superior to repressive legislation.

Such in brief has been the hundred years' history of that part of Poland which, with promises of liberty and autonomy, was assigned to Prussia. The policy of Mittel-Europa has striven (and has largely succeeded) in stripping it of its lands, its religion and its tongue, patching the rents with German fabric. It is not much to be wondered at that when in November 1916 the Central Empires proclaimed the independence of Russian Poland, which they still jointly occupy, its inhabitants put but little faith in the significance of the boon, for they were familiar with the interpretation placed by the Germans on the word independence. Their suspicions have been amply justified.

The three partitions had given to Russia certain Eastern Polish provinces mentioned above* which had formed part of the ancient republic, and by the Congress of Vienna this arrangement was con-

* These were Kovno, Vilna, Grodno, Vitebsk, Mohileff, Minsk, Volhynia, Podolia, and Kieff.

firmed and the district known as the Kingdom of Poland was added. A constitution was granted it which assured it of equality of citizenship with Russian subjects, liberty, its own language, to be taught in schools and to be used officially, and a national government consisting of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies. The observation of these pledges was of the shortest duration, and Russia soon began infringing them and depriving Poland of any semblance of independence or self-government. The effect of this was the insurrection of 1830, which ended in the victory of the Russian armies and the capture of Warsaw. Russia thereupon deprived the Kingdom of Poland of its constitution and of its army, and put at the head of the administration a Russian general, Paskevitch, who ruled the country by martial law. All literature dealing with subjects calculated to keep alive feelings of patriotism among Poles was suppressed, and the national church was deprived of her position as state church.

The accession of Alexander II. in 1855 saw a more liberal policy introduced. A Council of administration was established again, Polish was taught in schools, and Polish officials were employed in the civil administration. But after the second insurrection of 1863 the separate adminis-

tration of the Kingdom of Poland was abolished, the country was finally incorporated into the Russian empire, Poles were expelled from all official posts, and their places taken by Russians sent from Russia, and all shadow of self-government and semblance of liberty was withdrawn. The possessions of the church were confiscated, communication with the Holy See was forbidden, and in 1874 the rites of the orthodox church were made compulsory. Polish schools were suppressed, the Polish language forbidden in schools and as the official language, and in a word the whole of that part of the kingdom of Poland which had fallen to Russia was completely Russified so far as laws and the penalties for breaking them could ensure the process.

In Lithuania, once also belonging to Poland, this second insurrection was visited with even greater severity under the administration of General Muravieff (suitably styled "The Hangman"), who was given unlimited power to punish the insurgents as he chose, and used that power with the utmost ability of his savage mind. He treated the Poles as enemies of the state, he shot the ringleaders, he destroyed whole Polish villages and sent their inhabitants to Siberia, he suppressed all Polish papers, he prohibited the use of the Polish

language in public altogether, even in conversation in the streets, and in particular he inflicted heavy fines on landowners and clergy who did not fall under direct suspicion of having had any part in the insurrection, in order to render them more powerless for the future. The proof, even the suspicion of complicity, was not required: perfectly innocent men were deprived of the power of doing again what they had never done at all. No Pole was permitted to acquire land in Lithuania or Little Russia, so that any Pole who wished to sell his hand, must sell it only to a Russian: this measure was supplemented by a further ukase in 1887 which provided that if any Pole not being a Russian subject, inherited real estate in Lithuania or Little Russia, he had to sell it within two years. Catholic churches were transformed into orthodox, orthodox monks were put in possession of Uniat monasteries.

Now revolutions are dangerous things, and the state, among whose peoples occur such risings as the Polish insurrections of 1830 and 1863, is perfectly right to put them down, for the state's first duty is to ensure its own safety. If it is a liberal and beneficent government, it will remedy the injustices that have given rise to discontent, but it is primarily its business to suppress what is dan-

gerous to its own existence. But in the case of Russian Poland it must be remembered that it was the disregard of the Russian Government for the promises which it had made to its Polish acquisitions that directly produced these risings: it had shewn itself an irresponsible autocracy to whom its own treaties and obligations meant no more than they mean now-a-days to Germany, and having put down those risings, Russia in no way redressed the wrongs that had occasioned them, but aggravated the burdens and disabilities of the people to whom she had promised rights and liberty. In the democratic crisis that followed the Japanese war, it is true, certain concessions were made to the Poles, certain liberties granted them—they sent, for instance, thirty-four members to the Duma (a number reduced in 1907 to twelve)—but, broadly speaking, during the hundred years that succeeded the partitions, neither Russia nor Prussia shewed any sincere intention of fulfilling the obligations they had entered into after the Congress of Vienna, but both alike pursued the settled policy of extinguishing the national consciousness of the people whose territories they had appropriated. In this, though they tried to loose all the ties which bind a people together, they have utterly failed. The national vitality of

the Poles, as a race, has survived the century of bondage, and exists to-day with no less vigour than it did when those partitions were made. The tie of blood has proved to be insoluble by oppression, and the shedding of it has but cemented its coherence.

The Poles of the province of Galicia, which was assigned to Austria, fared no better, up to the year 1867, than their fellow-countrymen in Prussia and Russia. The most rigid system of Germanic bureaucracy was brought to bear on them, and they suffered barbarous oppression. Economically also Austria worked for the ruin of the country.* She suppressed both the natural resources of the country and the industries of its inhabitants. But after Austria's defeat in the war of 1866, she had to reform her internal policy and grant rights to her subject races and from that date the conditions of the Poles of Galicia were greatly ameliorated. Polish, for instance, is the official language of the province, and is taught in Polish schools, and the fact that Austria belongs to the Roman

* A typical instance of this is the way in which she treated the cloth industry. Cloth made in the country for consumption in the country had to be taken to Vienna, paying an import duty on the way, to be stamped there and taken back, after paying another duty, to Galicia. Production was thus rendered impossible, and the factories were closed.

communion has assured religious liberty for the Poles, who have their Archbishop at Lemberg, and three Bishops at Cracow, Tarnow, and Przsmysl. They have freedom of access to Rome, and are appointed jointly by the Holy See and the Emperor. Galicia is represented in the Chamber of Deputies at Vienna (which consists of 545 members) by 106 members, of whom 28 are Little Russians, the rest Poles. The Minister of Galicia who has a seat in the Cabinet at Vienna, is always a Pole, and in the central administration at Vienna about seven per cent. of the officials are of Polish birth. Galicia enjoys an autonomy, though a limited one, with a Diet of its own under a Marshal, 73 per cent. of the members of which are Poles. The Crown is represented by a Lieutenant-General, who since 1849 up to the outbreak of war has always been a Pole. Since then the appointment has been held by two Germans in succession, first General Collard and then General Diller. Economical exploitation, however, still continues; there are, for instance, differential tariffs and railways, facilitating imports from Austria to Galicia and penalizing imports from Galicia into Austria.

Such in brief have been the fortunes and misfortunes of the nation which for more than a hundred years has been dismembered and assigned

to its three neighbours. Two of them, Russia and Germany, have, as we have seen, made no pretence of granting the autonomy they promised to the people of the territories which they received, and up till the outbreak of the war, Lithuania and the kingdom of Poland have not enjoyed the autonomy that was guaranteed them more than have the Polish inhabitants of Posen or Royal Prussia. In both cases the policy of the annexing nations has been to absorb, to merge, to kill the consciousness of separate nationality. As far as legal disabilities, lingual suppression, religious bondage go, they have done their utmost. But it is one thing to stifle the expressions of national feeling, and quite another to extinguish the spirit that animates them, and in that regard they have signally failed. Austria alone for the last fifty years has acquitted herself of her obligations, and has granted to Galicia a fair equality of rights with the other races who compose her patch-work Empire, and a reasonable measure of autonomy. But it is not equality of rights among the subjects of different nations that the Polish National spirit desires. It does not ask for decent treatment at the hands of Germany or Russia or Austria. What it demands, and what the governments of the Entente have repeatedly promised it, is that it

should be reunited and independent: it does not crave indulgence, but its due. On the grounds of the rights of smaller nations to exist, it claims that the territories into which Germany, Russia and Austria have divided it, should be reunited into a sovereign and independent state. But it is not merely as an act of belated justice that the Allies have insisted both in separate and in joint pronouncements on the execution of this: had there been, for instance, no European war, for other reasons, it cannot be supposed that any of them would have provoked it in order to give Poland the rights which they now claim for her. The significance of Poland to them is in relation to the menace of Germany's Mittel-Europa policy.

CHAPTER III

Poland and the Entente

As we have already seen, England, France, Italy and America have repeatedly declared, by the mouths of those officially pronouncing the will of their respective governments, that the union and independence of Poland are among the objects for which they are to-day waging war on the Central Empires. Russia though no longer a member of the Entente, since her bastard government of the moment has torn up her treaty with her allies and has signed a separate peace with Germany, has also in the days before her collapse declared for the same policy, for the Grand Duke Nicholas in August, 1914, proclaimed the unity of Poland implying thereby the union of the Kingdom of Poland with Prussian and Austrian Poland, while the revolutionary government announced the independence of Russian Poland in March, 1917, thereby relinquishing Russia's sovereignty over the Kingdom. Since then Russia has ceased to exist as a member of the Entente, and indeed, tempo-

rarily, as a nation at all, and so we may take it, without provoking argument, that the Entente is unanimous for Polish unity and independence.

Meantime, owing to the military situation none of the Entente powers have been in a position to accomplish this aim, which necessarily implies the total defeat of the Central Powers, without which neither Germany will give up a yard of Prussian Poland, nor Austria of Austrian Poland, nor either of them a yard of what once was Russian Poland concerning the partitioning of which between them, irrespective of Polish feeling on the subject, they have held and are still holding prolonged debates, occupying it in the interval with Prussian callousness. Whatever solution they intend to adopt, they will not unless compelled to do so by force, whether of internal trouble or military defeat or both, suffer their grip on any part of what was once Polish territory to be relaxed. Till then, a starved and subject country, sick with the deferred hope of autonomy which has been repeatedly promised to it, is in their hands to misuse as they think fit.

Now, broadly speaking, there can be no doubt, if any meaning is to be attached to words, what the general intentions of the Powers of the Entente are. They intend (as indeed they have de-

clared) to unite those portions of Central Europe which are contiguous to each other, and in which the Poles are indubitably the predominant nationality, into one state, and to give that state independence in a political, an economic and a military sense. They intend also to give it access to the Baltic, without which it cannot hope to prosper or maintain itself. While the affairs of Eastern Europe are in a state of such chaotic flux, it would be useless to lay down with any approach to definiteness the actual frontiers of the new realm, or the territories which it will embrace, but the Governments of the Entente have singly and jointly proclaimed as one of the objects for which we are now fighting, the foundation of this new Poland the inhabitants of which may properly be described as Polish in blood, culture and sympathies. Districts lying contiguous to each other and to the once-Russian Kingdom of Poland will be united to form this free and reconstructed realm, which will have in round figures a purely Polish population of about twenty-one million people. Some claim that the total will prove to be higher than that: some estimate it as less, but this figure may be taken as sufficiently correct. Historically, also, the new Poland has a valid claim to these territories that will be assigned

to her, since up to the time of the three partitions, confirmed and modified by the Congress of Vienna, they formed part of the ancient Republic. If this is not the clear and obvious signification of the repeated declarations of Mr. Balfour, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, MM. Briand, Clemenceau, Ribot, Pichon, Signor Orlando, and Mr. Wilson it is impossible to guess what their signification is. Before that can be accomplished German arms must suffer a complete defeat, but unless it is accomplished, the Mittel-Europa policy will have won over the Entente and especially over England, Germany's chief opponent in this little matter of world-wide dominion, a victory of the most decisive nature. For should Poland remain in a condition of dependence on the Central Powers—whom for the future it will be truer and more convenient to call simply "Germany"—and be obliged to lean on them, there will no longer be possible any bar or obstacle to the victorious advance of Germany eastwards. The Ukraine has declared peace, so too has Rumania; Bulgaria is her ally, Turkey is in her pocket, and she can penetrate eastward to Bagdad, until those countries are soaked with her influence and domination as a sponge is soaked with water, and when "Der Tag" comes again, she can sever our connection

with India and Egypt and the British Empire will be hers. The Black Sea with its main ports is already now a German lake, as completely as if it were a mountain tarn in the Black Forest: and its main ports Varna, Costanza. Odessa, Batoum, Trebizond, and the key to them all, namely Constantinople are controlled by Germany. In the north the Baltic already, as the map stands, is a German lake, and no less is the Adriatic Sea, if Trieste, and the Austrian ports on the East Coast with their maze of defending and defensible islands remain in the hands of the Central Empires. Even the most ostrich-like of politicians when they consider this, can hardly miss the significance of Count Czernin's pronouncement when in declaring for the freedom of the seas, he expressly and explicitly stated *that the freedom of the narrow seas is not included in the freedom of the seas.* In other words, the three seas which are of vital importance to Germany as bases are to remain her private and inviolable harbours which she can close at any time, and, when she desires, project a fleet from them.

But to make her road completely open it is essential to her that Poland, in the sense of the words in which the statesmen of all countries of

the Entente have used it, namely a United Poland, consisting of some union of Russian, German and Austrian Poland, should be under the control of Berlin either directly or indirectly through Vienna. It is equally essential to the aims of the Entente that it should not. If, in fact, at the end of the war, Posen and West Prussia remain in German hands, Galicia in Austrian hands and the Kingdom of Poland, whether joined to Galicia or not (as by the Austrian solution), in the control either of Austria or Germany, then, whether or not Germany gives back Belgium with suitable reparation, and restores Alsace and Lorraine to France, the Entente will have lost the war. Indeed, so vital to the interests of the Central Empires is the retention of Poland, that M. Hervé (evidently with information behind him) has suggested that Austria would be willing even to cede Trieste and Pola to the Italians on condition of the Entente consenting to see the Kingdom of Poland joined to Galicia under a Habsburg suzerainty. This junction of the Kingdom of Poland with Galicia, is known as the "Austrian Solution," and has been a policy debated between Germany and Austria since they occupied Poland in 1915. It is treated of in detail in Part II of this book.

Now it must clearly be understood that it is not

merely nor even primarily in the cause of abstract justice that the pronouncements of the governments of the Entente have stated and reiterated their declaration with regard to Poland. A great wrong was undoubtedly done to the country when by the partitions and the Congress of Vienna more than a hundred years ago, a free nation was divided and wiped off the map. But the Entente did not go to war in order to redress that ancient wrong, though undoubtedly one of the main reasons, indeed the main reason, why they now cannot arrive at some basis from which peace-discussion could arise, is that they will not accept any such solution of the Polish question as implies unlimited German control over these territories. Nor is there any conceivable cause why Germany should yield in this matter until she is forced to, for the creation of such an independent Poland as the Entente demands, will be the most serious check that could possibly be dealt to her Mittel-Europa policy, and also implies an immense loss of territory for herself.

The historical claims then of Poland to these territories does not concern the Entente or the objects for which they are fighting. At the most it is a supplementary consideration marginally noted at the edge of the real question at issue.

The historical claim is admitted, but it does not exercise weight. Calais once belonged to England, Syracuse once belonged to Athens, but nobody proposes to restore them to England and to Greece because they once belonged to them, and the Entente do not propose to restore either German or Austrian territories to Poland for the similar reason. But the ethnographical reason is a very different matter: the population of these lands is neither Russian nor German nor Austrian, but Polish. One nation inhabits them, and, as a nation, it has a right according to the programme of the Entente, to a national existence, for it has shown itself for centuries able to cohere and govern itself, and it was a series of unjust provisions that tore it apart. And this acceptance by the Entente of this ethnographical claim coincides with the necessity of securing a check to the Mittel-Europa expansion of Germany. It is essential for the peace of the world and the integrity of the British Empire that there should exist just here a strong state that does not lean on Germany, but shall be in itself a bar to German absorption eastwards, and shall naturally find its orientation and its development independent of and opposed to Teutonic penetration. At present as we all know and deplore, there is chaos east

of Poland, and to lean on chaos is to be engulfed in the whirlwind. But no sane thinker, unless he believes in the sanity of Bolsheviks can doubt that some day out of chaos and outer darkness a light shall shine again, and a call of a people's will shall be heard, and when fire and tempest have passed shall come the "still small voice" for which the prophet hearkened. Socialistic, revolutionary against the order of those things that have been swept away, it will no doubt be, but what it will not be is the mad destructive hurricane which at present is the only manifestation of the power behind it. Unless Germany wins the war, there will be a democratic Russia, sympathetic in blood and in constitution to a democratic Poland. Out of the disintegration that Germany has made in the nation of her foe, will arise order again, but it must not be order as established by Germany. It is vital and essential to the peace of the world, unless by the "peace of the world" we imply a complete Germanic domination of the world, that a united and independent Poland should voice the will of a free people, and that her cry of "Liberty" should be re-echoed by Russia. Anything that makes for discord between the new Russia and the new Poland is a nail driven into the coffin that contains the corpse of a free world.

It is necessary to descend into the bewildering arena (mixed metaphors are the only way to express it) of Polish politics, in order to understand the feeling of the country itself with regard to its fate. That country at the present moment lies in the hand of Germany, but not "tame as a pear late basking over the wall," but more like a bomb with a time-fuse attached to it. It lies there for the moment in Germany's hand, quite quiet, since it cannot extricate itself from that iron grip, but it has not only the potentiality, but the necessity for explosion. Never was there a country so crammed with the chemicals that make the explosive mixture. Could a plebiscite be taken not only of the "Kingdom of Poland," but of Prussian and Austrian Poland as well, there is no shadow of doubt that an overwhelming majority would elect for the formation of a national unit, independent of Russia, of Austria and of Germany, that should form a united State of Poles. Such (and the numbers that would make up that choice are quite incontrovertible) is the will of the Poland that the Governments of the Entente have declared that they will call into being. If the Poles of Russian, Prussian and Austrian Poland could be given voting papers, there would be so great a majority for the declared in-

tentions of the Entente, that the minority would rightly be unrepresented. But of the unrepresented minority the most numerous as the most powerful factor would not by nationality be Polish or Austrian, or Russian or Prussian at all, but Jewish. The Jews, of whom there are very large numbers, as will subsequently be shown, both in Russian and Austrian Poland (in Prussian Poland their numbers are very insignificant) cannot possibly be expected to support the union rather than the disinegration of Poland, and the cause of this is so simple that it hardly needs to be pointed out. They have no national affinity for Poland at all, nor is there the smallest reason why they should have. Racially, they were detested by the Poles, and they were abhorred and persecuted by the Russians during the century in which Poland was under Russian government. But since Germany has been in occupation their lot has been vastly ameliorated and their yoke lightened. She has given them greater liberty and rights than they ever enjoyed in Russian Poland before; she has admitted them to the Council of State, she has founded Jewish schools, and above all she has given them "business." In both Poland and Russia she has employed the Jews on the mission of disintegration with the success that up till now

has always attended the policy of Mittel-Europa, and to-day the Judaic interest in the question of Poland cannot, in the very nature of things, be pro-Polish. *Pour le bon motif,* that is to say, for the interest of their nation, they support the German interest here, there and elsewhere, on patriotic grounds.* They have no national territory at stake; they are but the mistletoe, a strong parasitic growth, on other trees, and, as regards Poland, they have selected the tree that they consider most likely to give them nutriment. That tree is Germany. Here, on behalf of the Entente's declaration, is another reason for cutting down the tree. But better still would it be to convince the Jewish element in Poland that it would be more advantageous to root itself in the tree of the Entente, than on the world-ash of the Central Powers. It is, indeed, essential for the prosperity and coherence of the new Poland, that for the shrill antagonism that to-day exists between Poles and Jews there should be substituted the concord and community of interest that will make them friends.

Mittel-Europa is not yet quite entitled to sing

* In Russia similarly they have played Germany's game, both by aiding and abetting the Bolsheviks while they were Germany's tools, and by persistently making bad blood between the Poles there and the Russians.

its Paeans of victory, for the whole world knows that the fate of Germany at the present moment, hangs on the military operations on the West front. Should Germany gain a victory there, or even obtain an effective stalemate, her Mittel-Europa policy would proceed precisely as she desires it to proceed. But should Germany sustain a smashing defeat there, or a stalemate which her internal conditions render ineffective, all her policy, whether in East or West, whether Pan-German or Mittel-European must topple and fall. The Jews in Poland who are a very numerous and important body have definitely betted on Germany. The Entente has betted against her. While the military situation in the West remains unresolved, there is no conclusion to be reached. It is only necessary to note that the Jews of the whole of Poland as an independent united state, have put their money on Germany, because they believe that Germany will control the destinies of these territories.

But the Jews in the Kingdom of Poland are not only Pro-German but also anti-Polish, and it is noticeable that, whereas all Jews in German Poland declare themselves German, when a census was taken at Lodz after the German occupation, only 2,300 Jews declared themselves Poles, while

153,000 declared themselves Jews. The Poles claim that originally they were tolerant and hospitable to Jews, but that in the insurrections of 1830 and 1863, the latter sided against them with the Russians, and that during the last twenty years they have consistently organized themselves as a separate nationality, shewing marked hostility to the Poles. About 1907 they began a boycotting policy against Poles, forbidding their countrymen, for instance, to consult Polish doctors, and in 1909 when the Poles proclaimed a boycott of German products in Poland, this boycott failed because the Jews lent all their support to German commerce. The ill-feeling between the two has been steadily on the increase, and came to a head when in 1912, at the election of the fourth Duma, for which M. Kuckarewski and M. Dmowski were standing at Warsaw, the Jewish vote succeeded in defeating both of them and electing their own candidate. This led to a Polish commercial boycott of Jews, and at present the antagonism between the two is hostile and fierce. The feeling of the Poles towards them is not so much anti-Semitic as such, but is the antagonism of a race for a foreign and hostile dweller in its lands. Germany to-day is in possession of Poland, and the Jews of Poland lean over the shoul-

ders of the landlord, protected by his bulky form from the hisses and hatred below. For if there is one face that the Pole, as a nationalist and patriot hates more than the German face, it is the Jewish face. Whatever the rights and the wrongs of this antagonism are, the antagonism acutely exists, and no solution, Austrian or otherwise will dissolve it. The Pole believes that the Jew is at present completely antagonistic to his national ideal, unless it is a German ideal. But for Poland to become a united independent state, not fearing German penetration, it is essential that a liberal policy towards Jews should convince the latter that their interests are cared for and appreciated by the national government.

(ii) *Polish Parties*

In the shifting kaleidoscope of Polish politics a party is formed one day to dissolve or amalgamate itself with another the next, and the trumpetting that heralds its birth may only imply that a dozen men who happen to agree with each other have after dinner christened themselves by some high-sounding name. It would be useless to define the vast majority of these parties, to render an account of the various shades of opinion which are

congregated into the Parliamentary terms of Left or Right, or explain in what points the Christian Democrats, for instance, or the National Federation or the Union of Economic Independence who form part of the Right differ from each other. But three of these groups with their main policies must be outlined.

I. A considerable body of opinion among Poles favours the Austrian Solution, that is to say, the union of Russian Poland with Galicia forming an autonomous state under a Habsburg prince. The Social Democratic party of Galicia and Silesia is identified with this, but the policy of the whole group is based on the notion that this is the best solution that Poland can possibly hope for, and the pillars that support the structure are not love of Austria, but hatred of Germany and Russia. Its adherents do not believe that an independent and united Poland, consisting of German, Russian and Austrian Poland, is within the horizons of practical politics, and they would prefer to see Russian and Austrian Poland under the sceptre of the Habsburgs, while Posen and West Prussia remain German, rather than that the Kingdom of Poland should remain in German grip. But they accept this because they consider it the best that can be had. The powers of the Entente, it is

hardly necessary to state, would never willingly consent to such a solution, since it would defeat the object for which they are fighting. Poland would thus come under the direct control of the Central Empires, and though nominally she would enjoy autonomy under Austrian suzerainty, she would assuredly be fitted into the Mittel-Europa structure. For the Dual Monarchy has in fact to-day no independent existence. It is Germany and Germany alone that keeps it together, and Poland partitioned between Germany and Austria, even though the Austrian province should be granted a large measure of autonomy, would remain a link in the chain of Mittel-Europa expansion, a story in the structure of the Mittel-Europa house.

Germany hitherto has never quite admitted the Austrian solution, though on several occasions since she and Austria have occupied the kingdom of Poland she has come near to doing so, and, while still they occupy it, may yet do so, for though it would remove the kingdom of Poland from her direct control, she knows very well that she controls the Dual Monarchy. Indeed her domination over Austria would be thereby increased, for she would no doubt demand as the price of her consent that the seats in the Austrian Parliament hitherto occupied by Poles should

henceforth be occupied by Germans, for the Poles would no longer have any voice in the Reichsrat but would sit in the assembly of the newly-made autonomous state. Germany would thus secure a preponderance in the Austrian Parliament over the Czech element. These and other points have from time to time inclined her to the Austrian solution with the condition attached that she should annex to Germany a certain portion of the Russian Kingdom of Poland, leaving the greater part to be joined to Galicia.

But on the whole she has hitherto considered that the disadvantages to her personally of the Austrian Solution outweigh the advantages. Should the greater part of Poland pass into Austrian control, it would be Austria who recruited her armies from among the Poles, and thus Germany would not directly obtain the quarries of man-power which she would like. The more thorough-going Junkers, such as Hindenburg and the Crown Prince, are in favour of her annexing the Kingdom of Poland herself, directly and openly, and what probably keeps her back from so doing is the knowledge that she would have on her hands a turbulent province always ready to break into insurrection, for of the nine and a half millions of Poles who inhabit it, there is not one who

would not protest against such an annexation. The fact of her having declared the existence of a Polish state with all the creaking machinery of the sham Regency Council and the sham Council of State, does not for a moment deter her from tearing up the Constitution she has granted; what does give her pause is her inability to balance *pros* and *cons* and determine in precisely what solution of the Polish problem lies her greatest aggrandisement. Nor can she at present risk a rupture with Austria, and in the meantime the question of the appointment of a Regent and the Austrian Solution hangs fire.

II. The second solid party in the affairs of Poland is not Polish at all but Jewish. The Jews do not compose even one of the twenty-three parties of Polish opinion or form a bloc in the Council of State, and for this reason they are as a rule totally overlooked by those who want to estimate the values and weights of different sections of Polish politics. Without fear of contradiction we may say that they are, at the present moment, favourable to German aims and interests, and will undoubtedly by a grave danger to the stability of any future Polish state, unless the long-standing quarrel between the Poles and them is reconciled by liberal and democratic legislation.

III. The third main group in Polish politics consists of the parties which uphold and work for an independent and united Poland. Chief of these are the National Democrats who are allied with the Realists. The Realists in the main are landowners, and represent the upper classes of Poland. They have solid interests there, and their patriotism is confirmed, or as their opponents say, diluted, by the fact that they have a stake in the country.

But when we come to the National Democrats and their allied groups we find for the first time in this short analysis of the main Polish parties, one that is as solid as the Jews, as well organised as any political party, largely dispersed and severed from its native land, can be, completely in accord in its aims, and representative not only of themselves but of many other parties in Poland, who would undoubtedly ally themselves to them, if they thought that the aims of their policy could be realized. These groups have as their entire aim the unity and independence of Poland. Their ascendancy in Russia during the years immediately preceding the war may be gauged from the fact that in the first Duma of 1906 and in the second and third Dumas of 1907 they and their supporters won all Polish constituencies. In the fourth Duma

of 1912 they won all but two, and these two, a witness to the growing power of Jews and German penetration, were lost by them and won by the Jewish interest. One of them was the constituency of Warsaw already alluded to. That their aims constitute the national aims of the Poles taken as a whole to-day was indicated at the elections to the National Council in April, 1918, for out of 52 * of the elected members no less than 37 belonged to the Inter-party club of Warsaw, which adopts the National Democrat programme as opposed to either the Austrian Solution or any German disposition of the future of the country. It is, however, important to remember with regard to the significance of those elections, that the deputies were elected by certain small bodies called Dietines, which have no claim to democratic representation, for in the German sphere of occupation those Dietines were appointed by Germans. Moreover, the Dietines in which the predominant vote was Radical or Socialist, abstained altogether from taking part in the elections, and thus the Inter-party Club, consisting largely of land-owning Realists had matters its own way. A further

* According to the Constitution there should have been 55 members elected, but I have not been able to ascertain who the remaining three are.

consideration is that the Realists, without being in the smallest degree pro-German, have yet this common bond with them, namely that both are equally concerned in resisting any revolutionary movement like that which lately caused the collapse of the Russian Empire, for the Realists represent the landed classes, while perhaps the greatest danger that faces Germany on the East is the spread of Bolshevism. We must, in fact, with regard to their elections realize that there was German support for the Inter-party Club. Though the Inter-party Club support the National Democratic programme, it was itself supported by German interest, which, equally with it, was opposed to the Socialist vote.

At the same time, to us in England, and indeed to the cause of the Entente generally, the National Democrats are of peculiar interest, since they, like the spokesmen for the various governments of the Entente, aim at the unity and independence of Poland, which is among the avowed objects of us and our allies.

But the National Democrats go further than the declarations of the governments of the Entente, and their programme now includes not only the union of Prussian Poland (as partitioned by the Congress of Vienna) of Austrian Poland and of

the Russian kingdom of Poland, but they wish to see united into one anti-German state, additional territories of the ancient Republic, which included the North-west and South-west provinces of Russia, territories which are not nowadays, nor indeed ever were inhabited by a Polish majority. In the Polish state, as the National Democrats would construct it, are included, "the whole Lithuanian linguistic territory and the country south of it as far as the eastern extremity of Galicia, i.e. the present governments of Kovno, Vilna, Grodno, the larger part of Minsk and of Volhynia." This quotation, embodying the delimitation of the Eastern frontier, is taken from a privately printed document of which it may be affirmed that though, strictly speaking, it is not an official manifesto, it is an authoritative and correct expression of this party of Polish national feeling, and is accepted by the National Democrats as a true exposition of their aims. M. Dmowski is their acknowledged head, recognised as such not only by them, but also by the statesmen of the Entente, and, whether we agree with the whole programme or not, we have to give it our most careful attention, since of all Polish parties, the aims of this party approximate more closely to the avowed objects of the statesmen of the Entente, for both have pro-

claimed and are working for a united and independent Poland. Since M. Dmowski is the acknowledged spokesman of the National Democrats and their policy, and has allowed this formal manifesto of their aims formally accepted by his party to be circulated privately among those whose business it is to deal with Polish affairs, it is necessary to go into these aims in a detailed manner, and also to indicate the different shades of opinion through which M. Dmowski himself has passed.

It says nothing against a serious and exceedingly shrewd politician as M. Dmowski undoubtedly is, that his opinions have changed, and that in these changes he has carried a solid and unsplit party with him, but it is important to recognise that the aims of the National Democrats to-day are not what they were in August, 1914, and to state the causes which led to this change. That they have been not only misunderstood but misconstrued is an additional reason for doing this. Since the outbreak of the war the National Democrats have taken no share whatever in party politics, but have devoted themselves entirely to the realization of their national aims. We will state first the programme as it stands to-day, and the grounds on which it is based.

The proposal is to restore to the new Polish

State the great majority of the territories that once belonged to the Ancient Republic before its partitions. The claims on which this proposal are based are: (I) historical, (II) ethnographical, (III) religious. But though the historical basis is completely valid, for it is a mere matter of fact that all and more than the National Democrats claim did once belong to the Ancient Republic, the ethnographical and religious claims do not so uniformly coincide with it or with each other. Very often both are commensurate with the historical basis, but sometimes, as we shall see, not both, but only one of them covers the historical field. The historical field again in certain instances, stretches itself out alone, and gets no support from ethnographical or religious considerations.

Eastwards the National Democrats do not claim the whole of the original territories which once extended as far as the Dnieper in the South, and from there ran more or less due north, and included the government of Mohileff, Vitebsk and a large part of the Ukraine. Instead, as stated above, they would leave out governments like Mohileff (where Poles are in an infinitesimal minority) but they include Lithuania, Minsk, and Volhynia. Along the north they make their frontier the Baltic from the mouth of the Niemen

to the north-west extremity of the Bay of Dantzig. From there the frontier is drawn roughly southwards, and includes in the new state the territories of West Prussia, Posen and Upper Silesia. On the South the Carpathians form a natural frontier, and thus there is included in the new state the whole of Galicia. Poland would thus be reunited and, according to the authority already quoted as a reliable mouth-piece of their aims, "it may be taken for granted that on the territory of a Polish state, as roughly outlined above, the population, Polish in language, culture, ideas and feeling would represent not less than seventy per cent. of the whole number of inhabitants." New Poland would on these lines "have an area of about 200,000 square miles—nearly equal to that of France or Germany, and a population—about 38,000,000—nearly equal to that of France." It would have its seaboard on the Baltic with its ports of Dantzig and Koenigsburg, thus exercising a perpetual veto on the Baltic becoming a mere German lake: its river-road of the whole course of the Vistula, its immense Silesian coal-fields, its petroleum-producing area in Galicia, its valuable metallic deposits in the district of Kielce; its industries in iron, cement, sugar, textiles already flourishing before the war would re-

vive again, and to them would be added the industries of Galicia and of Prussian Poland, which, as I think M. Dmowski clearly sees, is the key-stone of the new structure. It would raise a national army that would easily suffice to protect its national interests and independence, its size and population would perhaps even give it rank among the Great Powers, for already the Poles themselves constitute numerically the sixth European nation. Dawn would break on the night that has lasted for a hundred and fifty years of starless darkness. Such are the aims and the aspirations of the groups of Polish patriots, of whom the National Democrats are the chief.

Now the advantages both for the Polish nation and for the powers of the Entente secured by the successful construction of such a state are so obvious that they need hardly be pointed out. The Polish interests in fact are identical with those of the Entente, and, as we shall presently see, they form but a part of the much larger programme for the checking of the Mittel-Europa expansion in which both are vitally concerned. The strength and independence of Poland, her affiliation to Slav interests instead of her subordination to German interests are an essential factor in the aims of the Entente. An independent and power-

ful Poland in fact is essential to secure the failure of the Mittel-Europa scheme. But before passing on to those wider issues it is necessary to examine the constructive aims of the National Democrat party, and their acknowledged leader, M. Dmowski, somewhat more in detail.

The National Democrat Party sprang from the National League which was organised about 1885, and its aims were to bring together the efforts of all Poles in all three parts of Poland for the reunion and independence of their country. In 1895 M. Dmowski founded the *Pan-Polonic Review,* which was devoted to the development of this policy, and published its official programme. In 1907, the year which saw the creation of the Anglo-Russian Entente, the National Democrats deliberately adopted the orientation of the Powers of the Entente as opposed to that of the Central Empires, believing that before long the conflict must break out, and their motives and policy was fully set forth in *"La question Polonaise,"* by M. Dmowski, which was published in Paris in 1909. Here it is stated that Germany is the chief enemy to Polish aspirations, and that her aim is the destruction of Polish national ideals. A development of this policy was seen in the participation of Poles in the so-called "Neo-Slav" move-

ment, the aim of which was to unite all Slav countries in the coming struggle against Germany. After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1909, when Austria was preparing for war against Russia, there began (also among patriotic Poles) a propaganda against Russia, as being a chief enemy to Polish independence, and General Pilsudski, whose patriotism and honesty have never been questioned even by those who most disagree with his policy, organised the Polish legions on behalf of Austria against Russia. This had the unfortunate effect of splitting up into opposed camps the most fervent Polish patriots, Pilsudski believing that Russia was the chiefest of Poland's enemies, while the National Democrats under the lead of M. Dmowski had decided to adopt the orientation of the Entente powers as against Austria and Germany, and thus when the war broke out, we find one party of Polish patriots in the military service of Austria against Russia, while the other, by the mouth of M. Jaronski, a Polish member of the Duma, declared in that assembly, on behalf of the Polish nation, that the Poles would support Russia against the Central Empires, and expected that the war would effect the realization of their dream of national unity and independence. Immediately

following on that came the proclamation of Polish union by the Grand Duke Nicholas, which was accepted by the National Democrats. As we have seen, this was taken by them to imply the union of Prussian and Austrian Poland with the Russian kingdom of Poland under the sceptre of the Tsar, but naturally it did not include Lithuania and the other Russian provinces which the National Democrat programme now claims. It was not until the Russian revolution of 1917, when the utter disorganisation of Russia was evident that the National Democrats put out the extension of their aims and demanded these Russian provinces also. Up till then they supported Russia and the aims of the Entente. But on that, while continuing to support the Entente, they drafted their wider bill.

M. Dmowski, as has been seen from this short analysis of the policy of the party which he has always led, and of which he is the acknowledged spokesman, is a politician of the flexible type, or rather his tactics have been flexible, so to speak, though his strategy has been inflexible. His aims, that is to say, have never varied, though he has always been willing to ally himself and his party with any power which he thought was likely to grant some fraction of his invariable aspirations which throughout have been the unity and inde-

pendence of his country. Thus at one time he was violently opposed to the land-owning Realists, with whom he is now firmly allied, on the grounds of their being too subservient to the Russian Government. Opportunist he certainly has been, but it must be remembered that opportunism only becomes an intellectual or moral dishonesty when the aim of a policy, not the tactics that are likely to secure it, varies. And M. Dmowski's aim has always burned with a flame that has never flickered. But it is curious to note that while his aims have been invariable, his policy has always been precisely the opposite of Pilsudski's. The latter, now languishing in German internment, has always fought with Poland's chief enemy, whoever that was, while M. Dmowski has always made friends with any who promised concessions.

It was for this last move, namely, the demand for provinces belonging to a disintegrated country which hitherto he had supported, that his enemies and opponents, Socialists, Jews and Cadets, chiefly deride his career and politics as those of a "Facing-all-ways." It has made him an easy target for caricature which, to the present writer, misrepresents him or does not understand him. For he accepted the manifesto of the Grand Duke as giving Poland the best chance of unity that was

then likely to be offered. He staked then on the success of the Russian arms, and Russia would never give Poland the Russian provinces which he now includes in his Polish State. Then came the collapse of Russia, upon which, still staking on the success of Russia's allies he enlarged his aims. To make the unity of the Polish nation complete, he added the provinces which Russia while it existed, would not give, but which non-existent Russia could not withhold. Without attempting to justify his policy, or approve of its wisdom, we must realize that it was not inconsistent. The motive behind it all was to secure the largest possible measure of unity and independence for Poland, and the collapse of Russia had now made possible—given that the Entente, minus Russia, was victorious—a greater Poland than was possible when the Grand Duke Nicholas made his proclamation, and the National Democrats accepted it.

His enemies misunderstood this, and on the accusation of political knavery, they built a further accusation of political imbecility. For they point to the programme of the National Democrats as it now stands, and say, "How on earth can this be realized? That Russia should give to Poland the provinces that belong to her implies a Russian

defeat, and a triumph of German arms. Unless forced to do so, Russia would never give up her own provinces. On the other hand, Germany and Austria will not give up Galicia and Prussian Poland unless they are defeated and Russia victorious. Therefore the Poland that M. Dmowski postulates implies a total defeat of both sides, which is impossible, and, therefore, M. Dmowski is a political imbecile."

Now this is very shallow reasoning, and is based either on misunderstanding or misrepresentation. As pointed out, the difference in tactics between the acceptance of the Grand Duke's manifesto and the completer demands now made by the National Democrats corresponds to the difference between the Russian situation of 1914 and the Russian situation of 1917. What was not possible in 1914 is, theoretically, possible now, and should the Central Empires be completely beaten, there is no practical reason why the National Democratic programme should not be realised. The Entente powers, that is to say, would, if completely victorious, be able to unite Lithuania and the other Russian provinces with Poland, and thus accomplish what M. Dmowski's opponents say was not possible except on the supposition that both Germany and Russia were simultaneously to suffer a crush-

ing defeat. Whether that is desirable or not is another question, but it is not an imbecile dream founded on the total defeat of two opposed belligerents. It was not possible in 1914, but it must be remembered that the National Democrats did not put forth that demand then. They accepted the Grand Duke's proclamation, for doing which then, and for claiming a completer Poland now, M. Dmowski has already been labelled a "Facing-all-ways." But if he is that, he is not an imbecile in demanding concessions that imply a total defeat of both sides. His enemies may make their choice as to which label they attach to him, but they really must not attach both. One of the two slips off.

But there are points in this programme of the National Democrats which demand much more serious consideration and criticism. It will be remembered that the National Democrats aspire to a new Poland of 38,000,000 inhabitants of which not less than 70 per cent. are "Polish in language, culture, ideas and feeling." Now 70 per cent. of 38,000,000 is 26,600,000, a number which vastly exceeds the total number of Poles in the whole area under discussion. Estimates as to this total differ; Mr. Geoffrey Drage, for instance, in his "Pre-War Statistics of Poland and Lithuania," gives

the total number of Poles in these territories as 18,626,000, a deficit of 6,000,000 below those in the privately-printed document. Similarly M. Olechowski, himself a Nationalist, who likewise makes out a strong case on behalf of united Poland, puts the total down as 19,400,000, and I have nowhere been able to find any authority or to construct any system of calculation which places the aggregate of the true Polish population as higher than between 21,000,000 and 22,000,000. Or, to apply another test, let us take in detail the various constituent parts of the new Polish state, and see how the percentages in them correspond with the percentage given above. They are as follows:—

	Percentage of Poles.
Kingdom of Poland	74.0
Lithuania	18.47
Minsk	10.3
Volhynia	9.97
Galicia	58.55
Teschen	54.9
Posen	61.5
West Prussia	35.5
Government of Allenstein	50.0

These are pre-war statistics, but they are the latest available, and it is at once clear from them that you cannot get out of them an average of

anything approaching 70 per cent. of Poles. In addition to this, the total population of the areas under consideration is considerably more than 38,000,000, and must be put down as being over 40,000,000, which again dilutes the percentage of Poles.

On the other hand, it will be noticed that the author of our document says that this 70 per cent. is "Polish in language, culture, ideas and feeling," and does not definitely say "Polish in blood." But the reader would rightly infer that this was meant, since his argument is ethnographical, and he himself confirms that impression, for he immediately goes on to speak of the various other nationalities which compose the remaining 30 per cent., leaving you to conclude that the 70 per cent. are Poles by blood. Ethnographically, then, his figures are wrong, and seriously wrong, while if he means exactly (though misleadingly) what he says, we must suppose that he includes among "those of Polish culture, etc., those of Polish religion, e.g. the Lithuanians. Some colour is given to this explanation by the fact that he says that "the Polish state . . . ought to include those provinces where Western (Polish) civilization is ineradicable . . . or where the majority of the inhabitants are Catholics." Unless he includes all

Roman Catholics as "Polish in culture, etc.," he cannot justify this 70 per cent., while (apart from the fact that if he does so include them, he ought to have said so) he must be aware that a very large percentage of those Roman Catholics are bitterly and violently anti-Polish. He tells us, for instance, that a great majority of the Lithuanians would vote for union with Poland, on which subject we shall speak presently, and on such unsupported assertions I think that he must base his 70 per cent. By no other means can he possibly arrive at it, and if these are the means he adopts, it must be noticed that he drops the ethnographical argument altogether, and substitutes for it the argument that co-religionists are always amicably inclined to each other. How dangerous such an assumption is, we shall see when we come in detail to the question of the inclusion of Lithuania in the Polish state.

Our author recognises that the Jews will be an anti-Polish and pro-German element, and true to his anti-Jewish views, which are perfectly sound, as derived from present conditions, admits that "so large a number (two and a half millions) of Jews on the territory of the Polish states presents a very serious disadvantage." But here again, in his desire to present the stability of his

future state, he both magnifies its strength and underrates its weaknesses, of which the pro-German Jewish population is among the greatest. For instead of there being only two and a half million Jews to be reckoned with there must be well over four millions of them, the various censuses showing:—

	Jews.
Russian Poland (1911)	1,716,000
Galicia (1910)	900,000
Lithuania (1897)	697,000
Minsk and Volhynia (1897)	740,000
Prussian Poland (1905)	68,483
	4,121.483*

To the new state of Poland, of which the Poles, *pur sang,* do not probably exceed twenty-one millions at the most, this Jewish element, consistently anti-Polish, of over four millions is a danger which the National Democrats do not seem adequately to appreciate. For not only are they formidable in numbers, they are formidable in position also, when we consider that 80 per cent. of the total trade in the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania before the war passed through their hands.

* These figures, however, include the populations of *all* Lithuania, Minsk and Volhynia, which are slightly greater than those in the programme.

Certain trades like the leather trade and the stocking trade were entirely theirs, and Jewish money-lenders infested the small provincial towns, bringing ruin on their general interests. They are largely town-dwellers, and in centres of industry they form a much larger fraction of the population than in country districts, where their influence would be more scattered and less capable of being concentrated and organized; in Warsaw, for instance, they make up 35 per cent. of the whole population. Moreover, since the occupation of the Kingdom of Poland by the Central Empires, the Germans have opened Jewish schools, removed the disabilities which previously attached to their race, and done all in their power to encourage them and strengthen their position, well knowing that by so doing they were tightening their own grip on Poland. All this our author minimizes, and hopefully remarks that there has been a "strong tendency among them towards emigration, which is likely in the future to develop on a larger scale." He commits the strategical error, in fact, of underrating the strength of his adversaries, which the Jews most undoubtedly are. In Lithuania, it is true, the Germans originally treated the Jews very differently, squeezing and despoiling them during the earlier months of their

occupation, for the reason that they then contemplated having to give back Lithuania to Russia, and wanted to make as much out of it as possible, so that they would restore it in a completely impoverished condition. But in the Kingdom of Poland they have encouraged Jews as being their allies and coadjutors, for they never meant to let Poland go back to Russian domination. From this point of view, it is no wonder that when late in 1917 a Jewish deputation waited on the Minister of Justice and Social Affairs, asking for further privileges, the minister replied that the best remedy for Jewish grievances was the emigration from Poland of Jews. This was a short-sighted and foolish reply, for the Jewish problem in Poland, if we are to see a strong and united Poland, is not to be solved by belittling their importance, or by hostility to them with a view to eliminating them. It cannot, indeed, be too strongly stated that a liberal policy with regard to Jews is absolutely essential to the coherence of the new Polish state. They are far too important and numerous to disregard, and hostility to them would merely result in making a strong pro-German party in a state which, in order to exist, must purge itself of pro-German elements. This particular purging cannot be effected in any other way than by shew-

ing the Jews that Polish prosperity is involved with their well-being.

(iii) *The Question of Lithuania*

We now come to a more detailed consideration of the question of Lithuania, which the author of our document claims for inclusion in the new state. Historically the whole of Lithuania formed part of the ancient republic of Poland up to the time of the partitions, and roughly consisted of the following provinces, viz., Kovno, Vilna, Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk and Mohilec. Out of these no claim, quite naturally, is put forward with regard to Vitebsk and Mohileff, where the percentage of Polish population is so small as to be completely negligible, for in Vitebsk Poles number only 50,000 out of a total of close on one million and a half inhabitants, while in Mohileff the percentage of Poles is but a third of that in Vitebsk, for in Mohileff there are but 18,000 Poles in a population of nearly 1,600,000. Thus out of "Lithuania," as considered as a part of the ancient Republic, all are agreed to omit Vitebsk and Mohileff altogether, for the obvious reason that they are not Polish at all. Ethnographically the overwhelming majority of their inhabitants are White Russians,

a race closely allied in blood and in language to Russia proper.

There remain, therefore, on our author's claim to Lithuania for the new united Poland, the provinces of Kovno, Vilna, Grodno and Minsk. Of Minsk he claims the "greater part," as also of another Russian province Volhynia. Since he separates the claim for Minsk and Volhynia from the claim for "Lithuania," we will follow his grouping, and understand by the term "Lithuania" the three provinces of Kovno, Vilna and Grodno.

His argument is that they once belonged to the Polish republic (which everybody allows), and so, on historical grounds, should be returned to it, and he supplements this by the consideration that the Lithuanians, at any rate, out of the inhabiting populations are co-religionists with the Poles. But the real reason on which his case rests, and for which (apart from the Mittel-Europa question) the Powers of the Entente have all declared themselves in favour of a united and independent Poland, is not a matter of history (otherwise England might claim Calais) or of creed (otherwise she might claim Protestant Germany), but of race. The cause that underlies the justice of a united Poland is the right of nations, small

or great, to exist, and ethnographically this demand for the annexation of Lithuania, and the greater part of Minsk and Volhynia, utterly breaks down.

With regard to Lithuania, our author allows that there would be included in the new Polish state two and a half millions of Lithuanians "linked to the Poles by religion and civilisation, who would find in the Polish state the conditions most favourable to their national progress." Read in its context, which claims for the new state 38,000,000 inhabitants of which 70 per cent. are "Polish in culture, etc., this sounds as if ethnographically the inclusion of Lithuania might be admissible. But when we come to look at Lithuania itself, it wears a very different aspect. For according to the most reliable information obtainable the census figures for Lithuania are these* :—

Total population 5,728,000, of which 18.47 per cent. are Poles; or in detail:—

Vilna	26.3	per cent. of Poles.
Kovno	11.4	
Grodno	17.0	

*"Pre-War statistics of Poland and Lithuania," G. Drage, p. 8. This estimate, if we compare it with others, gives the highest percentage of Poles.

The Russian return of 10 per cent. Poles in the province of Vilna is certainly below the mark, in fact it shews considerably less than half the true population, which is 26.3 per cent. But it is not admissible on purely ethnographical grounds to claim as national territory a district in which the nation in question only numbers a quarter of the inhabitants. As for the rest of Lithuania the percentage is lower yet, consisting as it does of 11.4 per cent. in Kovno and 17.0 per cent. in Grodno. This minority, it is true, consists to a considerable extent of land-owning Poles, as opposed to the mass of the Lithuanian peasantry, for Lithuania, is emphatically a country of rural populations, and in the whole of its three provinces there are but seven towns containing more than 20,000 inhabitants,* but if the ownership of land constitutes a claim for Poland over Lithuania, the same claim of the Germans over Silesia holds good, for a quarter of all Silesia belongs to six German proprietors. If then on the Democratic principle Poland refuses to admit the German claim there, she must abandon a similar claim

* These are Vilna (205,000), Bialystock (90,000), Grodno (60,000), Brest-Litovsk (60,000), Schaulen (22,000), Slonim (22,000). These figures are derived from a recent German source.

of her own with regard to Lithuania, in so far as it is founded on ownership of soil. And mere ownership of soil is a singularly poor Democratic argument.

Now since in these three provinces the total population is over five and a half millions, of which two and a half only, according to our author's figures, are Lithuanians, and of which Poles form only 18 per cent., what of the remaining millions? The answer is that by an immense majority they are White Russians, who, both by blood and by language, are closely connected, not with Poles at all, but with the inhabitants of Great Russia. Out of the three provinces, Kovno is overwhelmingly Lithuanian by blood, for the Lithuanians constitute a majority over Great Russians, White Russians, and Poles all added together. In Vilna the White Russians constitute a similar majority, outnumbering Great Russians and Poles and Lithuanians, and also, though not so overwhelmingly, in Grodno. There in the western part of the province the Poles have a local majority, and by a small rectification of the frontier it would be easy to include in the new Polish state a slice of territory, contiguous to the present Kingdom of Poland, where Poles will be in an indubitable majority, and a similar inclusion might

reasonably be made with regard to parts of Vilna. On ethnographical grounds, which are the only ones that the Governments of the Entente recognise as valid, these rectifications are desirable. But this is a very different thing from claiming for the future State of Poland a vast area of provinces which by no tie of blood or language can possibly be considered as authentically Polish. Kovno is overwhelmingly Lithuanian, Vilna and Grodno are overwhelmingly White Russian. In none of the three provinces of "Lithuania" is there an approach to a majority of Poles. The percentage in Vilna is the highest, for there Poles form one quarter of the total population. But to make an ethnographical claim on such grounds is to reverse the usual sense of the word "ethnographical."

However, the will of the people, self-determination, may constitute, even if ethnographically the conclusion is unsound, a reason for the fusion of one nationality in another, and our author asserts that a Lithuanian plebiscite would vote for inclusion in this new state. But even allowing that reports from Lithuania are coloured in Germany (which in itself does not seem probable, since Germany has before now considered the possibility of uniting the Kingdoms of Poland and Lithuania

under German suzerainty, and so would not emphasize the dissonance between Poles and Lithuanians), such evidence as is accessible does not bear out this assertion. For the inhabitants of Lithuania have repeatedly protested against a fusion with Poland, regarding the Poles as their bitterest enemies. In 1916, for instance, the Lithuanian Socialists demanded independence, and declared against union with Poland: the Union of White Russian peasants in the following year (at a Congress they held at Minsk) issued a proclamation demanding union with Russia; in 1917 the Lithuanian Army Congress in Petrograd demanded that Lithuanians then included in Polish regiments should be allowed to transfer themselves to Russian regiments. Such instances, it is submitted, are tangible evidence against a mere assertion, in support of which no evidence is produced.

It is, moreover, a dangerous thing to lay too much stress on the value of the bond of religion in such a consolidation as this unless that bond is cemented by the stronger ties of blood, for while religious differences have often constituted a cause of quarrel, we do not, as a matter of practical experience, find that a unity in religion constitutes a very binding force, except when, per-

haps, there is religious persecution which brings co-religionists together. Such has not been the case in Lithuania, and as a matter of fact Polish and Lithuanian co-religionists have before now arrived at a very acute pass in the matter of the language to be used in churches, Lithuanians advocating a Lithuanian ritual, in those portions of the mass where Latin is not used, and Poles championing their own tongue. In fact, the religious bond has been the cause of considerable differences in opinion, and free fights have taken place in churches. Accounts of such disturbances have no doubt been exaggerated, but it is important to avoid exaggeration on the other side, and find in a common religion a valid cause for incorporating Lithuania in the new state. This religious bond, moreover, whatever it is worth, is only applicable as between racial Lithuanians and Poles. But in the three provinces which constitute Lithuania the numerical majority of the inhabitants are White Russian, whose national religion is not Roman Catholic but Greek orthodox. If then a common religion binds two of these nationalities, the same bond is equally valid between Russians and White Russians.

Similarly in the Russian province of Minsk (the greater part of which is claimed by the National

Democrats for the new state) and of Volhynia, we can find no ethnographical reason for this fusion since the Polish population of Minsk constitutes at the very outside but 10.3 per cent. of the total population, while in Volhynia it is slightly less, or 9.97 per cent. And in the absence of ethnographical support, have these districts shown any self-determination towards union with Poland? I think our author would have mentioned it if they had. Finally, in Eastern Galicia he only claims a minority of 25 per cent. for the Poles, and this seems, if we compare it with other estimates, to be rather a rosy view of the extent of the consanguinity.

There is then no sound ethnographical reason why these former Russian provinces should be joined to the new state, but there are very sound reasons why they should not. To begin with, the whole case for the unity of Poland rests on ethnographical grounds, and to incorporate provinces in none of which Poles form anything like a majority is to stultify those grounds. To incorporate these Russian provinces not by their act of self-determination, but as far as we can see, in direct opposition to their will, would be to introduce a constant element of friction in the new state. There are, God knows, enough Polish parties as

it is, and the inclusion of these malcontent populations would have the result not of strengthening the new state by adding to its numbers, but of weakening it by introducing discordant and rebellious elements. The fallow-field has to be sown with corn, and if the Entente permitted this, they would themselves be sowing tares there.

But German politicians were more far-sighted—they the enemy sowing tares—than Polish patriots, who on the complete explosion of Russia ran to the spot and picked up fragments of the disjected structure. Germany from time to time has seriously considered a scheme for the union of parts of Lithuania with Poland, and ideas have been mooted for the colonization of Lithuania and Courland, in the further distant future, by Poles. Either of these schemes was worthy of her policy of dividing and so governing, and it was partly the more short-sighted sabre-rattling insistence of the Hindenburg Junkers and the opposition of Austria, who wanted a juncture between Poland and Galicia under a Habsburg prince, that prevented these policies from being carried into effect; partly, she anticipated serious trouble in Lithuania itself, if she attempted to carry out such an unnatural union. She would have liked to do it, for such policies were policies of dis-

integration, which are the sharpest arrows in the whole of German diplomacy, and the astonishing thing is that Polish patriots, who genuinely, but less long-sightedly, desire the union of Polish nationalities, should have advocated the same programme as Germany, with the opposite end in view, also desired. Germany, a thousand times was right in wishing to join Lithuania to Poland as a means of defeating the aims of the National Democrats. M. Dmowski and the National Democrats, I venture to think, are wrong in proposing this unnatural union as a source of strength to the future Polish State.

There is another reason, stronger than any yet, against this unhomogeneous welding together of states that by blood are in the main alien, that by religious conviction make a cause of grievance rather than a tie out of a common creed, and have only the historical bond, the fragrance of which is that of dried flowers, to bind together utterly dissimilar elements. Supposing the victorious Entente can construct the State of Poland as it chooses, what will be the result, either from the Nationalist Polish standpoint or from that of the foes of the Mittel-Europa policy, of this forced union? Some time and somehow, when once there is a bar erected against the Mittel-Europa expan-

sion, there must, if that bar is to be effective, arise a Slav state, or several Slav states, eastwards of Poland. Russia, in some form or other, will arise from its ruins, possibly united again, but probably separated into a Muscovite state and a Little Russian state, and to make the bar against Mittel-Europa capable of resistance to German interests the State of Poland must infallibly orientate eastwards, and not look to the German frontier for its friends. But should Lithuania and the other provinces be forcibly torn away from Russia, they will form a new and acuter Alsace and Lorraine in the Slav power which it is our design to erect against the expansion of Germany eastwards. Muscovy and South Russia, or, if they are conjoined, both of them, will indubitably want to recover the lost provinces, while the State of Poland will want to retain them. And the ally ready to help either of them will be Germany. New Russia will appeal to Germany to recover her provinces, or New Poland will appeal to Germany in order to retain them. One or other will make such an appeal, and it will not fall on deaf ears. Russian and German arms, as in the case of the original partitions, will fall on Poland, or Germany in alliance with Poland (thus mending up the broken chain of Mittel-Europa again),

will march against Russia. In either case, Germany will advance a step further on her eastward march. Should Russia and Germany come to an understanding, the new state will be crushed and repartitioning will begin again, should Germany and Poland come to an understanding, Germany will have affiliated herself to Poland afresh, and have a valuable ally against Russia.

This is not a fantastic conclusion, for Germany, never fantastic, has already foreseen it. As long as a year ago (February, 1917) Herr Gothein, one of the most acute of German political writers, advocated that Russian territories mainly inhabited by non-Poles should be united to Poland, because Poland would then be in a "natural permanent antagonism to Russia." Germany would create, in fact, an Alsace-Lorraine problem, such as existed between her and France. But in this case she would, again on the principle of '*Divide et impera,*' create it between her antagonists, an undeniably attractive scheme. One or other of them she would be bound to draw into her net, and Mittel-Europa, checked for the time by defeat in the present war, would resume its progress. Either the independent Polish state, created with such care by the Powers of the Entente, would be organized and armed and employed by her, or she

would make friends with Russia, and crush the new Polish state out of existence. In either case she would "score."

So, for both reasons, namely the homogeneity of the new Polish state, since the inclusion of Lithuania and Minsk and Volhynia would undoubtedly lead to internal disruption, and for the quashing of the Mittel-Europa policy it is of primary importance that the new state should not contain discordant elements, or elements that belong not to her, but to the Power with which she must be affiliated, namely the Slav element eastwards, and not the Teutonic element westwards. One or other of the new states, either some form of Russia or the more distinct form of an independent and united Poland, must otherwise, if the new state attempts to incorporate provinces that are Russian by the ethnography which is the basis of the new state, be driven into the embraces of Germany, who, as already noticed, will be ready to receive it with open arms.

Such, outlined as briefly as possible, seems the only really debatable point about the programme of the National Democrats with which, otherwise, the policy of the Entente is in complete accord. If united Poland, according to the programme of M. Dmowski and the National Democrats, ever

succeeds in including Lithuania, Minsk and Volhynia, she will have sowed the seeds of her own destruction. And if the powers of the Entente, successful, as is postulated from the first, over the Central Empires, consent to such an arrangement, they will have sowed tares among their corn.

The harvest that will eventually be reaped will have been of their own deliberate sowing. They will have sown the seeds of dissonance between their own allies, and when that harvest is ripe it will be Germany who will put in the sickle. A new Russia is essential to their aims as well as a new Poland, and it is vital that the two shall not start life growling over a contentious bone. The new state of Poland, with the perpetual menace or the insidious Mother-Wolf smile of Germany on one side of her, must be buttressed by the Slav interests contiguous to her on the East, and to sow cause of dissension between a resurrected Russia and the recreated state would be an act, in the opinion of the present writer, of political imbecility that positively calls for trouble, and he finds it hard to see how there can be any divergence of opinion among those who recognise the actual and potential menace of Germany's *Drang nach osten.* To attempt to enlarge Poland by the introduction

of discordant elements, unsupported by ethnographical validity, at the expense of the country with whom she must be allied is to create a quarrel between those on whose union of interest the whole anti-Mittel-Europa policy depends.

Finally, on grounds of even wider and more essential expedience, this inclusion of Lithuania and the other Russian provinces in the new state of Poland is undesirable, since it would be an anti-democratic step, based not on the will of the people, but, precisely, on the Imperialistic spirit which our armies and our navies are fighting. The mere desire of possession is all the reason that can be produced for the National Democrat claims to Minsk and Volhynia, while ownership of land, which is at the base of the plea for Lithunia, is scarcely less Imperialistic than the other. If the new state is to prosper it must be built on such democratic foundation as that on which Russia will sometime arise again, and not on the principles by which Germany annexes and governs. She, the friend of tyrants, knows democracy to be her bitterest and most dangerous foe, and to found a Poland which is not hallowed by democracy would be to create a friend to Germany in the people whom we desire to establish in impregnable resistance to her. And the pil-

lars which support that state must be the undivided and invincible will of all those who compose it.

What, then, must be the fate of Lithuania if the Polish solution is inadmissible? Either she must form an autonomous state, or revert to some, as yet non-existent, Russian combination. So long as Russia is in its present condition of chaotic anarchy, it is quite impossible to foretell what that combination will be, but it is unthinkable that such chaos is anything but temporary. Given the defeat of the Central Empires and an end to their unhindered policy of disintegration there, order will eventually be restored and a firm political establishment emerge, to which Lithuania, considerable sections of which are in favour of the Russian solution for their country, will be attached. Other sections of opinion there vote for independence, but the political objection to that is the smallness of a possible Lithuanian state, while its complete isolation implies a territory strategically indefensible among more powerful neighbours.

I have presented the case against the proposed absorption of Lithuania in the new Polish state at some length, because the principle involved, namely, that of securing harmonious relations be-

tween the states which will form the barrier to the unlimited expansion of Mittel-Europa eastwards, appears to me of supreme and vital importance. It is only fair, therefore, to state with equal clearness the views of the leading National Democrats on the question who are in favour of the inclusion of Lithuania in the new Poland.

They argue that this cession of Lithuania to Poland is not in the least likely to cause friction between the Polish and Russian states since, according to their views, Russian politicians recognise that the country was wrongfully wrested from Poland by the partitions, and that though its inhabitants are not in the main of Polish blood they are just as little of Russian blood, but form a nationality of their own, too small to be constituted into a wholly independent state, and therefore to be attached with some considerable degree of self-government to a neighbouring state. That state should in equity be Poland, of which for four hundred years Lithuania formed a part, whereas only the political crime of the partition has joined it wrongfully to Russia for a quarter of that period. The National Democrats place second to none of their aims the rehabilitation of Russia, but as Russia is now, and must continue for many years yet, in a state of disorganiza-

tion, it is vital to the anti-Mittel-Europa policy of the Entente that Lithuania should not remain in loose confederation with a Power whose whole energies and resources will be taxed to the uttermost for years to come in establishing order and government among the peoples who directly belong to it. Furthermore, the most sanguine of optimists cannot expect that Russia can recover her strength and solidity before the lapse of many decades, and it is necessary that while Russia is weak, so, proportionately, should new Poland be made as strong as possible in order to render firm the barrier to Germany's expansion eastwards.

Just as Russia will not, according to the view of the National Democrats, object to the loss of Lithuania, so Lithuania will not object to Poland's gain. Educated opinion there sees as clearly as the National Democrats themselves that she cannot stand alone, for that would speedily mean that she would be penetrated by Germany, and her most natural affiliation is to Poland. By blood she is a non-Russian country, and though by blood she is not predominantly Polish either, yet the Poles form a not negligible percentage of her population, while her civilization is purely Polish. The two countries have a common religion, and economically she is far more closely

bound to Poland than to Russia, and for years her trade has gravitated to Warsaw and not to Petrograd or Moscow. Linguistically also, though the native language has as little to do with Polish as it has with Russian, no educated Lithuanian is ignorant of Polish, and it is impossible for an educated man to live there with interchange of ideas and civilized thought without speaking Polish. Russian is merely the official language imposed by the dominating state, and the necessity of the employment of the Polish tongue was seen when, during the advance of the German army, the troops passed out of Poland into Lithuania. For the Germans arriving there dismissed their Polish interpreters under the impression that Russian alone would now be needed. But they could make no headway whatever in that language, and had to send for their Polish interpreters again.

It is with these arguments, many of which have undoubtedly considerable weight, that the Polish leaders of the National Democrats support their claim for Lithuania. The matter does not admit of compromise, for Lithuania must be united either to Poland or to Russia. Ethnographically she strictly belongs to neither, but with all due respect to the right of separate nationalities to

enjoy a national and independent existence, it is clearly possible to push that principle too far. Basques and Bretons are not ethnographically French, nor are the Welsh English, but just as no sane thinker would dream of demanding for any of those a separate independent existence, so no one who has studied the problems of Eastern Europe could wish to create an independent Lithuania. She must be joined to Russia or to Poland, and the reader who reflects on the arguments advanced on the one side and the other must make up his mind in which direction wisdom points.

Note.—*Mr. Harold Williams has very kindly read over and discussed with me the foregoing arguments advanced by the National Democrats for the inclusion of Lithuania, and has sent me the statement of his views on the question, which I append:—*

"Note on the Claim of the Polish National "Democrats to Lithuania.

"The National Democrats are powerfully influenced by the Polish historical tradition. That is their strength, but it also creates certain difficulties in the search for an equable solution of the problems of Eastern Europe.

Without going into the larger question of the extent of territory that may ultimately be included in the reconstituted Polish state, it may be sufficient to point out in reference to Lithuania:—

"(1) That it includes a very considerable White Russian population which is certainly more Russian than Polish. The official language of the Lithuanian state which under Jagello was united with Poland was White Russian, and the ground of the claims of the Grand Dukes and Tsars of Moscow and Russia on Lithuanian territory was the fact that Lithuanian territory was largely 'Russian,' and included principalities which in the Kiev period formed a part of the loosely federated Russian state. This purely historical argument has little force now, but the ethnographical argument retains its weight.

"(2) The Lithuanian National movement, which has developed in recent years, is predominantly anti-Polish, and is not anti-Russian, though it strongly opposed the oppressive measures of the Russian Government. Russian was not merely an official language.

It was, next to Lithuanian, the principal language of civilised intercourse used by the Lithuanian educated class. It is true that numbers of educated Lithuanians also spoke Polish, but in their modes of thinking and methods of action the influence of their training in Russian schools and universities is very noticeable.

"(3) The assertion that the inclusion of Lithuania in Poland would not cause friction between Poland and a reconstituted Russia is hardly tenable, and would certainly not be upheld by responsible Russian politicians of any party. The restoration of an independent Poland within her ethnographical frontiers is an axiom of Russian statesmanship, but to my knowledge it is equally certain that Russian political leaders do not admit any Polish claim to sovereignty over Lithuania. If the physical possibility of deliberate and unfettered choice can be established, it is of course for the peoples of Lithuania themselves to decide with which neighbouring political unit they prefer to be more intimately connected. But from the standpoint of political stability in Eastern Europe, which is

the consideration of greatest importance to the Allies, it would be more desirable to see Lithuania federated in some way with Russia, while giving certain economic privileges to Poland. The ideal solution would be one that would make Lithuania a link, and not a bone of contention between Russia and Poland.

HAROLD WILLIAMS."

CHAPTER IV

Poland's Place in New Europe

At the present moment the policy of the National Democrats with regard to a united and independent Poland is concurred in by the Realists (landowners), the Progressives, the Christian Democrats, the party of Economic Independence and the National Union. Their united aims, including access to the sea for the new independent State, have been now centralized in the Polish National Committee, which has been formally recognised by the Entente Powers. M. Dmowski is its President in Paris, Count L. Sobanski represents it in England, M. Skirmunt in Italy, and M. Paderewski in America. But since many, if not all of the Polish Parties in the Kingdom of Poland (with the exception, a weighty one, of the Jews) would support its policy, if they thought that there was a chance of its being realized, it is very important that it should clearly be brought to their knowledge that the powers of the Entente are solid for the establishment of the new State, that, in fact,

it forms an essential part of their scheme for annihilating the Mittel-Europa policy of Germany. It is true that there have been many single pronouncements on behalf of one or other of the Entente governments to this effect, but I would venture to suggest that a joint declaration * would be useful in order to restore in Poland a fuller confidence in the sincerity and unanimity of the Entent's aims in this regard. During the events of the last year, owing to Germany's success in her detachment of Russia and her crushing of Rumania, this confidence has undoubtedly been shaken, and an impression, zealously fostered by German propaganda, has been produced that the Entente, in the absence of a solid declaration on the subject, may be treating the question of Poland as a counter for bartering with. There has, too, been an ambiguity in the latest utterances of the Entente which has aroused suspicion, which it is most important to allay. Mr. Lloyd George, for instance, in January of this year, said "We believe that an independent Poland composed of all the *genuine Polish elements* desiring to form

* This has now been done, for at a meeting at Versailles on June 3, 1918, the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, France, and Italy, declared that a united and independent Poland, with access to the sea, was one of the conditions of a solid and just peace.

part of it is an urgent necessity for the stability of Eastern Europe," and Mr. Wilson echoed the ambiguous "genuine Polish elements" by the phrase "incontestably Polish."

This expression has been pounced on by Germany, and interpreted to the Poles as signifying the exclusion of any territory where the population is not completely Polish, and the insinuation has been made that since no territory is exclusively inhabited by Poles, the Entente mean to do nothing for them, except keep them as a make-weight to balance other concessions which Germany might have to make. It would restore Polish confidence in the sincerity of the promises made by the statesmen of the Entente, if it were possible for them to define their purposes a little more clearly, and "make known the interpretation thereof."

Best of all would it be to demonstrate to the Poles that the existence not of a small Poland but a large one, not of a weak state but a strong one is as essential to the aims of the Entente as it is dear to the heart of all Polish patriots; that Poland's interests are identical with their own, not merely for the reason that nations small and large have the right of a national existence, but because of the stark necessity of preventing Ger-

man expansion at will eastwards. The motive of self-interest is always the clearest and most comprehensible to other people, and it is the self-interest of the nations of the Entente that Poland should be a nation too. The whole scheme is not difficult of explanation, and it is necessary to attempt it.

It may be taken for granted that when Germany has asked for peace and has obtained it, not on her own terms but on those of the Entente, the Dual Monarchy will automatically fall to bits. It is at present governed by two minorities, the Magyar and the German, which jointly exercise authority over a non-cohering congeries of nations alien to them in blood. Of such are the Czechs, the Croatians, the Poles, the Slovaks, etc., who are held together by the cement of German predominance. Touching but briefly on this, and as it were, for the instruction merely of Poles who do not understand how essential is the erection of the strong Polish state to the success of the policy of the Entente, we may note that, as has been incontrovertibly pointed out, another necessary link in the chain of Slav countries which will bar Germany's progress eastward will be a new Bohemia, comprising the present Kingdom, Moravia, part of Austrian Silesia and perhaps

the northern or Slovak portion of Hungary. This kingdom would consist of a large Czech majority, and would number altogether some eleven million inhabitants. This Czech obstacle in the middle of Germany's highway to the East, is of the very first importance. A long frontier of this state would thus run between the New Poland and the New Bohemia, and the two would have between them the strong cement of a common German antagonism.

The restoration of a reinforced Rumania similarly, though not bearing directly on Poland, forms part of the scheme of the Entente; so too does the construction of the much-discussed Yugo-Slav state. Into all the intricacies of this, admirably set forth in the anonymous pamphlet quoted in the last chapter, it is not necessary to go, and indeed the mere analysis of the question is a matter for a separate treatise. To state the terms of it as briefly as possible, this Yugo-Slav state will consist of a population of Serbian speech, and include Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slavonia, and part at any rate of the Adriatic provinces of Dalmatia and Istria. This latter is of the first importance with regard to the effective combination of the Entente as touching Germany's expansion eastwards, for it brings

a new, powerful, Slav and anti-German state into touch with Italy and completes the cordon of the Western Allies.

It will be seen from this mere enumeration what the general policy of the Entente is with regard to these Slav countries. The Entente want to make the largest possible political units of them. To attempt to bar Germany's progress by the creation or by the retention of a series of small states, would but give the signal for Germany to begin her nibbling again. Solid masses, not sundered units, must be put in her path, not a handful of pebbles which she can remove one by one, but ponderous rocks against which she will break in vain.

It is for this reason that the Yugo-Slav combination has been propounded, and for precisely the same reason the policy of the Entente demands a Poland that shall be powerful and united, not leaning for support on Germany, nor easily to be penetrated by her, but joined for all future years in sympathy and interests with the Slav nationalities that will be at her back for her support and buttressing, as she faces the power that tried to enslave her and failed. A small Poland, not uniting the vast majority of its nation, has no part in Polish aims, and it has none in the

aims of the powers that will her unity. *To be of practical use to them they must enable her to realize her own aspirations.* To-day the powers of the Entente are facing a front of Germans and German vassals that stretches from Ypres, solid and unbroken through Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey, as far as Hit on the Euphrates. Behind it, at the disposal of the Central Empires lie the once-free countries they have enslaved or conquered, and, as in a barred room, their diabolical surgery goes on in the bodies of the bound, helpless but alive nations. But presently it shall be otherwise, and instead, a ring of living and vigorous peoples shall confine the power that once thought to enslave the world. From the shores of the Baltic, right across Europe to the shores of the Black Sea and the Adriatic, and from those shores westwards through Italy and France and northwards to England (the fort set on the seas that are free), and so across to the Baltic again shall the circle be formed, of which every part is essential and irreplaceable. And like some inexhaustible regiment in reserve America watches from the west.

But it is not only by land to check the soaking of the corrosive German acid eastwards, "peacefully" distilled by Jews and Turks, or to stay

the march of German legions that a free and united Poland shall stand insolubly linked to anti-Teutonic forces, but by sea also that she shall hold in her hand the containing cord. As we have already noticed, the Central Empires have let slip what they really mean by the freedom of the seas, and by their gracious permission they concede to the rest of Europe undisputed passage over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans: but they have explicitly told us that the freedom of the high seas does not extend to the narrow seas. The Black Sea therefore and the Adriatic and the Baltic must remain as they are to-day, German lakes, where perhaps ships of other nations may cruise for their own pleasure or for Germany's profit, so long as Germany has not more serious business on hand. Then up shall go the signal "Closing Time," and they shall be barred to us until Germany, behind fortified entrances and mined waters shall have made her naval preparations. There is no exaggeration about this: this is precisely what Germany means, and what she has said.

Thus not on land alone Poland shall be significant for the freedom of Europe; she will be, with the coast of the Baltic in her hands, significant as regards the freedom of the narrow seas

over which Germany claims the sole control. For not only will the loss of this coast be an open door into the sea which otherwise Germany, in her present domination of the Baltic, might close at will, but in a far larger measure than this Poland will be an essential link in the chain that by sea no less than by land will effectually bar the limitless expansion of Germany's scheme of slavery for the world. For here will be the northern termination of the line of unbroken anti-German states that will extend in a south-easterly direction across Europe to the ports of the second of the narrow seas that to-day is German, and from Dantzig to Costanza the line of federation will be complete. There on the Black Sea today every port is in German control. Through Turkey's subordination to her she has her finger on Trebizond and Batoum, and the key to the whole of that littoral, Constantinople; by her peace with the Ukraine she is port-master of the South Russian harbours. By her conquest of Rumania, Costanza is controlled from Berlin.

But in order to ensure the freedom of the seas (by which we do not mean a freedom in the sense so clearly laid down by Count Czernin, according to which the control of the three European seas that are of supreme importance to Germany is

excepted), it is vital to the interests of the Entente that the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles should remain no longer in Turkish hands. Earlier in the war the expulsion of the Turkish government from Constantinople was laid down as among the aims of the Entente in the prosecution of their purpose, but a few months ago that provision was cut out (perhaps with a view to inducing Turkey to desert the Central Empires), and she was told that she might keep Constantinople. This formed the subject of satirical comment on the part of a certain Turco-phil portion of the English press, and we were reminded that it was but reasonable to tell Turkey that she might retain that which we had been unable to take away from her. But whatever was the object of that concession it failed to detach Turkey, and it is most sincerely to be hoped that since Turkey rejected what she certainly understood to be an offer of terms to her, that offer and that concession will now be considered to be withdrawn. They were made, they were rejected, and—there is an end of them. For with Constantinople still in Turkish hands there can be but an insecure freedom of the Black Sea. It is impossible, however firmly, in a territorial sense, we may separate Germany from her present vassal, to prevent

her reconstructing her hold over the Ottoman Empire. And with Constintinople and (in consequence) the Straits in Turkish hands, it will be worth Germany's while to intrigue and permeate again, so that, at her bidding, Turkey can close the Straits, as she has often done before, when convenient to Germany. Our policy here, in fact, ought not only to aim at securing a reliable freedom of the Black Sea, but by the removal of the Turkish power from straits and capital alike, to make Turkey useless to Germany. Unless the Entente abate more of their demands, Turkey will at the conclusion of the war lose Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Arabia, but so long as she holds the straits in her hand she may be of use to Germany. And when a thing is of use to Germany she generally picks it up, and puts it in her pocket. She has already done that to Turkey, and though at the end of the war we must take Turkey out of her pocket again, she will assuredly put her back there some day when we are not looking (which occurs most days) if Turkey still holds the Straits.

It is, then, quite essential to the completion of the chain of seas which form part of the barrier that will prevent the armies of the Central Empires from progressing eastwards in accordance

with any new scheme of conquest which they may frame, that the Black Sea shall not have doors that turn it, when closed, into a German lake: and equally essential is it that the Adriatic shall not have ports and harbours and defensive islands linked by interior lines of communication with the Central Empires. Treitschke once declared that Trieste was more important to Germany than Hamburg, and earlier yet Bismarck pronounced—and none of his utterances goes further to prove the genius of his statesmanship—that Trieste was the point of the German sword. That is profoundly true to-day, and since that sword-point is sharper now than ever, and flashes, poised with graver menace, it is the business of the Entente to break that point off and weld it shining and strong on to the sword of Italy. Europe is not to see the Adriatic with its long Italian coast-line on the one side, and the Dalmatian ports and islands on the other, turned into a German lake, according to Count Czernin's programme. Too long already has the Adriatic constituted the cleavage between the East and West of Europe, with the powers of the Central Empires bridging it at the top, thus enabling them to menace and strike now East, now West. In the new Europe Italy shall join hands with the Yugo-Slav State

on the East of that sea, with coast-line for both, and the Adriatic shall be under the guardianship of those to whom its shores belong.

It is not by bombing the holy places and palaces of Venice that Austria will cow the eternal youth of Italy into a senile submission, and though in sheer wantonness at the bidding of German Kultur she wrecks and makes irreplaceable the loveliest things that the hand of man has builded in answer to the instinct of the heart that loves beauty, she destroys not them only, but, irreplaceably also, her claim to be a civilised power, being naught else than the vassal of her mistress whom the world will never forgive. Like the St. George of Donatello, Italy stands there to guard her land, and her feet are beautiful upon the mountains and swift upon the plains where the Huns are gathered to destroy the loveliness of all the ages. By her are Jeanne d'Arc and St. George of England, and when the menace of Attila has been hurled back, Italy will reach out her hand across the narrow sea that Germany designed to be one of her harbours. And what Italy is in the south of Europe, and as regards the Adriatic, that precisely is Poland in the north and as regards the Baltic. Each links together the East to the two quarters of the West, completing the

circle of free states that shall form the barrier against enslaving Powers. Each section of that encircling barrier is equally essential, for no security can come to the world till it is welded and complete.

It was in January of this year that a Polish member of the Chamber of Deputies in Vienna called attention to the iron oppression which Germany exercises over his native land, and a fellow-member whose nationality need not be indicated said to him—

"Dear Colleague, you forget that Germany is the power that has saved you."

"If I fell into a river," replied the other "and my saviour after pulling me out of the water refused to let me go, but constantly repeated 'Now I have saved your life, you must be my slave,' then I would pray God to save me from my saviour . . . Stop this rescuing! Enough of this Salvation!"

And there in bleeding drops spoke the heart of Poland.

PART II

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF POLAND

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CHAPTER I

The Russian Proclamation

On the 14th of August, 1914, the world being then at war, the Grand Duke Nicholas, uncle of the Tsar and Generalissimo of the Russian forces, issued the following proclamation on behalf of the Crown. It was signed by him and not by the Tsar, since international etiquette forbids the Monarch of one state to address the subjects of another state, and this proclamation was addressed, as will be seen, to subjects of Austria and Germany as well as to Russian subjects:—

> "Poles! The hour has struck in which the sacred dream of your fathers and forefathers will be realised. A century and a half ago the living body of Poland was torn, but her soul did not die, sustained as it was by the hope that for the Polish people the moment

of resurrection would arrive and at the same time the fraternal reconciliation with the Great Russian Empire. The Russian army now brings you the solemn tidings of this reconciliation. *May the boundaries be annihilated which cut the Polish nation into parts!*

"May the Poles in Russia unite themselves under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar! Under this sceptre Poland shall be re-born, free in faith, in language, in self-government.

"Russia only expects of you the consideration due to the rights of those nationalities with which you became allied through past history.

"With friendly feelings and cordially-outstretched hands the Great Russian Empire steps forward to meet you. The sword that conquered the enemy at Grünwald * has not grown rusty. From the shores of the Pacific Ocean to the Arctic Seas the Russian armies are marching. The dawn of a new life is breaking for you. May the sign of the Cross illuminate this dawn, symbol of the Passion and the resurrection of the nations."

* It was at the battle of Grünwald (1410) that the Polish armies, under Ladislas Jagello, completely defeated the Teutonic knights.

Now the meaning which it is natural to attach to this proclamation about which there is a vague and sumptuous magnificence, is that Russia intended (i) to grant independence to Poland; (ii) to restore to it (as it indeed states) freedom in religion, in language, and in self-government, thereby acknowledging that Poland, in spite of the promises made it, had not hitherto enjoyed these benefits; and (iii) to unite to it, "by the annihilation of the frontiers which divide it," the territories which at the three partitions in 1772, 1793 and 1795, were assigned to Germany and Austria. Poland was henceforth to be free and united under the suzerainty of the Tsar. Owing to the defeat of the Russian armies by those of the Central Powers, the Government was never in a position to effect this reunion, for a year afterwards Galicia and the Kingdom of Poland were in the hands of the enemy.

But during that year no practical steps of any serious or sincere sort were taken to give the smallest effect to this proclamation, and, without cynicism, it seems more reasonable to suppose that the motive behind it was in the main a defensive one on the part of Russia with "disarming intent." Russia was proposing to advance victoriously on Berlin and Vienna in the crushing

manner of the steam-roller about which our Press was once so irresponsibly resonant, and she knew very well that to have in the rear of her armies a race that for a hundred years had seethed with discontent at the withholding of the freedom that had been promised it, was to court disaster. It would have been necessary for her security to leave at least 20 per cent. of her forces to guard the lines of communication, and ensure quiet and order; moreover, in the Russian armies were enrolled some 800,000 Poles, who were being led against the armies of the Central Empires, which contained nearly the same number of men of their own race, drawn from the districts of Posen, Silesia, West Prussia and Galicia, and love of Russia, founded on detestation of Germany, had to rise superior in the breasts of her Polish soldiers, to love of race. The mention, moreover, of Grünwald, and the Grand Duke's confidence that the Polish sword had not grown rusty, indicate that Russia asked for Poland's loyal and unstinted military support. The Poles, soldiers and civilians alike, were for the moment capable of being a grave menace to the Russian arms, and this proclamation, endorsed as it soon was by the Governments of the Entente, was the surest way of commanding their loyalty and co-operation.

In fact, the Grand Duke Nicholas did precisely what Alexander I had done a hundred years before, when in the Napoleonic wars Poland was able to constitute a menace to Russia, and had proclaimed the independence of Poland, in order to kindle Polish enthusiasm on Russia's behalf. On that occasion, Poland, as we have seen, did not respond to this invitation, but joined the cause of Napoleon, with the result that in place of the fulfilment of the fine words, there followed for her the Congress of Vienna, which, instead of giving her independence, but confirmed the partitions and ushered in a century of oppression.

A further point to be noted about this proclamation is that it contains no hint that the provinces of the ancient republic now part of the Russian Empire, such as Lithuania, should be included in the reunited Poland to which the Grand Duke alluded, or that Russia contemplated in the faintest degree placing within the frontiers of the new autonomous state those territories which for the last hundred years she had incorporated into herself, and which were in fact ethnographically non-Polish, since the bulk of their inhabitants were White Russians or Little Russians. The National Democrats, and their allied

groups also, who for years had worked for the unity and independence of Poland, at that date made no such claim, though their policy to-day includes the reunion with Poland of these provinces, but they accepted the Grand Duke's manifesto as meaning that Russia intended to reunite with the Kingdom of Poland, Prussian Poland and Austrian Poland, and to place the whole with self-government, under the sceptre of the Tsar. Had Russia advanced into Germany and Austria, and made good her advance, so that in conjunction with France and England she could have dictated a peace, it is pretty clear that this was what she meant to do, and she probably would have been obliged to do it, since the Grand Duke's proclamation as regards Poland was presently endorsed by all the Allies.

Now Russia never had the opportunity of fully vindicating her good faith with regard to the proclamation, for while she was in a state of war, and must needs strain every nerve to the vigorous prosecution of that, it would have been unreasonable to expect her to devote energies to the accomplishment of her promise, and within a year her armies, as we have noticed, had retreated from the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia altogether, leaving the enemy in possession. But

during that year the Russian Government, distrusting perhaps the effect of the Grand Duke's proclamation, did not endorse it by any practical measure, but on the other hand preserved and pursued a policy which was distinctly anti-Polish. Notices on the railways and in other public places written in Polish were suppressed, and the Russian advance through Galicia was followed by the importation of civil servants from Russia to replace Poles. As a guarantee of good faith, the Government might at least have begun placing Poles in official positions hitherto held by Russians, but nothing of the sort was done. Up till August, 1915, when the Germans were at the gates of Warsaw, the Russian Government made no official announcement about Polish independence, nor did they take any practical steps to warrant sincerity. All that the Russian Government did with regard to the fulfilment of the Grand Duke's proclamation during that period was to nominate a Russo-Polish Commission in May, 1915, with the object of elaborating a project of Polish autonomy. There were six Poles on this commission, including M. Dmowski and Count Wielopolski, and six Russian representatives under the Presidency of the Prime Minister Goremykin. They could not come to any agree-

ment, and the Polish members thereupon drew up and presented to the Government their own proposals. These dealt with two points: (i) immediate changes in the administration of the Kingdom of Poland, (ii) a constitution for Poland which recognised her as a separate state, under the Russian sceptre. This project was never even considered by the Russian Government, and, as was only natural, the sincerity of the Grand Duke's proclamation came to be seriously questioned. But it is most significant that at the moment of Germany's advance into Poland, Goremykin, then Minister of the Interior in Russia, announced to the Duma the granting of autonomy to Poland. The object of this was perfectly clear: now, when the enemy was in possession, the Government at last confirmed the Grand Duke's promises in order to prevent the Poles from embracing the cause of the Central Empires and furnishing recruits for their armies. The confirmation, in fact, of the original proclamation, unrealisable, since the German armies were in occupation, was made in the same spirit as the proclamation itself. We may then, I think, take it for granted that no independent Polish state, to include all the territories of ancient Poland, was ever for a moment contemplated by Russia, nor demanded

by Polish Nationalists, and that, as far as practical steps can supply a criterion of motive, the proclamation of the Grand Duke was little more than a defensive measure against Polish disloyalty in the face of the enemy.

Had there been any seriousness of purpose in the Russian Government of granting Poland the national rights so long promised her and so long withheld, some earnest of that purpose would have been given during the year when Russia was in a position to do so. Nothing of the sort was done, and it was not till Germany was in occupation that the independence of Poland was announced to the Duma, and then again no hint of any reality behind this can be ever so faintly detected, for when the Tsar summoned a conference in February, 1917, to discuss the constitution of Poland, it got no further than to debate whether the Polish National prayer might in special circumstances be recited in church! This weighty question was left, as far as I can ascertain, undecided.

In their retreat the Russian armies did their utmost, in obedience to the necessity of the military situation, to render the country a desert in front of the advance of the Central Powers. Ac-

cording to the report of a Dutch Relief Committee, 5,000 villages were destroyed, two million head of cattle and a million horses were requisitioned or died from want of fodder, and 400,000 workmen were out of work. The Russians cut down trees and dragged them across the fields where the crops stood high, thus helping to create the famine from which Poland still suffers; they dismantled industrial establishments, smashing up the machinery and carrying away such as they could transport into Russia, and in the midst of the desert they had made there were left more than a million Polish peasants homeless and absolutely destitute. Others, the more able-bodied, fled in front of the retreating army, and the country was stricken with the sufferings and the horrors that resulted from the *débâcle* of the Russian armies. These acts of devastation were, no doubt, dictated by the military necessity, but it was no wonder that they produced the greatest bitterness in the minds of an indigent and starving population, to whom, less than a year before, independence had been promised and the dawn of the fulfilment of their national aspirations proclaimed. Those weeks of the retreat from Galicia and the Kingdom of Poland did more to embitter Polish feeling against Russia than decades

of neglect and misrule. Instead of freedom, this military disaster gave them famine, and made a desert of the territory that had been promised liberty.

The native Polish population took the German entry into Warsaw in silent composure. They ignored, they disregarded it, except that in some of the streets blinds were drawn down, as if in protest or in mourning, when the troops passed. Hostile demonstrations were out of the question, but assuredly among the mass of the population there was no enthusiasm. After the manner in which the Russians had treated this unhappy country, both during the hundred years of their possession and at this crisis, it is no wonder that there possibly were, if the German accounts can be trusted, certain local exhibitions of thanksgiving over the removal of the Russian yoke, or that on the anniversary of the German entry in August, 1916, there was a demonstration, organised by the pro-German Club of the Polish state at the memorial set up at Warsaw to commemorate the death of Polish insurrectionists who had been shot by the Russians in 1864. Otherwise only the Jews, who constitute 35 per cent. of the inhabitants of Warsaw, hailed the Germans as deliverers, and on the same day on which the pro-

German Club of the Polish state held their commemoration, we find recorded in the *Warschauer Tageblatt,* a Jewish organ, an enthusiastic celebration of the German entry, which proclaims that this day should be inscribed in golden letters in the records of Polish Jews. "The spirit of Europe," it remarks, "entered in contrast to Asiatic tyranny," and it speaks of the Sporting Clubs, the Scout Societies instituted by Germans, in which orders are given in Yiddish for the sake of the Jews now at length allowed to become members of them. For German administration proclaimed full equality for Jews, gave their children religious education, and admitted them to hold office in various state departments hitherto not open to them. This treatment of the Jews was part of German policy to accentuate the acute bad feeling already existing between them and the Poles, for anything, according to German views, which sows discord in the non-German population of her empire is to be encouraged, since it relatively increases her own ascendancy. But we cannot possibly take these demonstrations as illustrative of the Polish national spirit, for they were not of Polish but of Jewish origin. Beyond doubt the Poles, by now, bitterly detested the Russians, who had cajoled them with empty promises of

which the fulfilment was famine, but they were not a whit the more friendly to the invaders.

Apart from the defeat of the Russian armies, Germany and Austria hoped that the acquisition of Poland would supply the Central Empires with man-power and with foodstuff. In both these respects they suffered a considerable disappointment, for neither came within leagues of their expectations. But they used the dearth of supplies caused by the destruction in the Russian retreat and augmented by the needs of their own armies as an instrument whereby they might encourage emigration of Poles into Germany for industrial work, while to accentuate the sharpness of this instrument both they and the Austrians laid hands on such foodstuffs as were available. Before the war the production of grain in Russian Poland completely covered the country's own consumption, and a certain amount was exported; now, owing in part to the Russian destruction of crops, and in part to this commandeering of supplies, there was an acute bread famine. Train-loads of potatoes and wild geese left for Vienna, while Germany during the ensuing months managed to secure 253,000 wagons of provisions, chiefly corn and meat, from the districts of Lomza, Plock and Kalisch, where the Russian retreat seems to have

been too hurried to allow systematic destruction, and setting her tabulating statisticians to work she calculated that Poland should be able to send annually into Germany sixty million eggs and a million wild geese. It was also ordained that Poland should support the army of occupation, and permission was given to soldiers to send parcels of food to their relatives in Germany, the contents of which should not be deducted from the rations of the recipients. Similarly all copper, tin, lead and pewter were requisitioned for the needs of the army. At the same time large quantities of seed-corn were brought into the country from Denmark, making a provision for the army and possibly for the Poles in future years.

It is no wonder that, when we consider that these levies were made on a population that was already starving, the destitution of thousands became appalling, and in especial the mortality among infants. In many towns milk and all fats were absolutely non-existent; we read of children so soft of bone that they could not stand upright, and of a plague of scurvy in Warsaw, which affected 90 per cent. of the poorer classes. Food-riots were frequent, and were suppressed with Prussian thoroughness. Yet when the British Foreign Office asked Berlin for a guarantee that

supplies let through the blockade should be used for Poland and not for Germany, and that the native foodstuffs should not be used for the maintenance of the occupying armies, it was refused. Needless to say, a chorus of vituperation burst from the Press at British inhumanity, which inhumanity consisted precisely in this, namely, that the British Government did not see its way to let the charity of other countries revictual Germany. Such relief as reached Poland by land routes was put into the hands of Hindenburg to administer, which augured well for the comfort of German soldiers, if not for that of those for whom it was sent.

This policy of starving the Poles in order to supply their own wants both Germany and Austria continued brutally to exercise, and as late as November, 1917, innumerable trucks of fruit, corn and potatoes were passing out of the starving country into that of its occupiers. We may judge from this what fraction of foreign supplies would have been allowed to feed the people for whom they were to be sent.*

* Galicia was little better off than Poland, and the same commandeering of supplies has gone on there ever since; as late as December, 1917, a Polish deputy, Stapinski, called attention to it in the Reichsrat.

The starvation which was intended to further Polish emigration into Germany failed in its effect, and we find that only about 21,000 Poles were induced to go, of whom a certain number were taken by force. They did not respond at all eagerly to the bait of "peace and plenty" in the Fatherland, and they viewed with a suspicion that their "deliverers" could ill understand, letters purporting to come from their countrymen there who spoke of the delightful conditions prevailing in Germany. On one occasion von Beseler, the German Governor of Warsaw, sent such an account to the Editor of a Warsaw paper, who refused to publish it unless he inserted a footnote saying that the entire communication came from the German military authorities. For this contumacy he was fined 4,000 marks. Those of the Poles who went were, like the Jews and natives from Lithuania, not permitted to return, and we hear of some of them at work in the Zeppelin sheds at Oldenburg, while interned Polish prisoners were trained and sent to the front.

Similarly the man-power desired by the Germans for recruits in the armies of the Central Empires was not forthcoming at all. Germany had made a grave miscalculation, for though there were tens of thousands of Poles ready to fight

against Russia from patriotic motives, there was not one per cent. of these who were ready to fight for Germany. Germany, according to the official German view, had delivered the country from the Russian yoke, and had zealously proclaimed her liberating rôle. But what she failed to understand was that the national sentiment of Poland had no greater affection for Germany than it had for Russia. There were few, except the Jews in Poland, who looked on Germany as their deliverer, though Germany made the most of the very gratifying remarks which they addressed to the Kaiser about the invincibility of his armies. But as a practical test of the extent and depth of such emotions, the result of recruiting for purely German purposes after the declaration of the Polish state was not encouraging. For the Poles resented the Germanization of Posen and Silesia just as much as they resented the Russification of other parts of the ancient realm. The result, in any case, of the appeal to die, not for Poland but for Germany, as we shall see later, was highly unsatisfactory. The occupied territories made no response whatever.

CHAPTER II

The First Year of the German Occupation

Germany seems to have realised from the first that the management of the occupied territory of the Kingdom of Poland would present difficulties, and, apart from its systematic starvation, necessitated by the needs of her armies, and her desire for industrial emigration into Germany, she adopted a wiser policy than she did, for instance, in Belgium. Warsaw was taken on August 5, 1915, and schools were reopened there by August 25th, and both in primary and secondary classes Germany allowed Polish to be taught. German and Polish in fact were compulsory languages in schools, and German was taught by Poles. Russian, however, was completely prohibited, and no books or papers other than those that had passed a German censorship were allowed to be introduced into the territory at all. Similarly as an anti-Russian measure she permitted the Byzantine ritual for Greek Catholics, which Russia had prohibited. Now Germany had barred the teaching

of Polish in schools in the Duchy of Posen and Prussian Poland, but then she had definitely annexed them and incorporated them into the German Empire, and any attempt at conciliation there was mere weakness. But she was still doubtful whether this fresh conquest was ripe for a similar coercion, and in the interval she tried with an amazingly small degree of success to establish friendly relations with the inhabitants.

Russia, moreover, in this summer of 1915, was far from disabled, and there might still be severe fighting on the Eastern frontiers of Poland. It was wise therefore, firstly, so long as no sacrifice was entailed, to seem to adopt a more liberal policy of government than Poland had previously enjoyed, in order, if possible, to make the inhabitants of the occupied territories better content with her rule than that of Russia. Just as in 1914 the motive of the Grand Duke's proclamation was to avoid having a disloyal and discontented population in the rear of the Russian armies, so in 1915 such indulgences as were given to the Poles were granted by Germany for precisely the same reason as they had been dangled in front of them before by the Russians. Secondly, a fresh invasion of the occupied territory from the East was still to be reckoned with, and her armies might be

pushed back. In that case she would have secured, once more in the rear of the enemy's line, a population that found it had fared better under her temporary rule than under that of the power which had laid their country waste. A third alternative was that she would remain permanently in possession of Poland, and so she proceeded apace with her usual penetrative work, on which we will touch presently.

But what chiefly occupied her with regard to Poland was the determination of what she wanted to do with it. Given that Poland was not going to be reconquered by Russia, there were the proposals of her Austrian Allies, who were meditating a programme far more attractive to the Poles than was any arrangement which Germany had the slightest intention of proposing, to be digested and disposed of. In brief, this "Austrian solution" was as follows the Kingdom of Poland, hitherto Russian, should be joined to Galicia, ceded by Austria, to form a self-governing state under a Habsburg prince, who, being Catholic, would be acceptable to the nation. This scheme obtained some adherents among the Poles, especially the Poles of Galicia of the class whose interests were bound up with the Austrian government, for during the last fifty years they had received

far better treatment at the hands of Austria than either Russia or Germany had granted to the provinces that fell to them through the partions. Hatred of Russia combined with hatred of Germany, who made no corresponding proposal about the cession of the Duchy of Posen, inclined many of the more moderate Polish groups, such as the League of the Polish State, to welcome some such Austrian solution as the best that they were likely to secure, and almost immediately after the German occupation of Warsaw the Austrian government published the manifesto of the Galician Supreme National Council, which set forth the general terms of the proposed arrangement. Germany strongly objected to this as inopportune in its appearance, the inopportunity chiefly consisting in the fact that she had not sanctioned it, and did not mean to. In consequence, a similar resolution of the Polish Parliamentary Club in Vienna was only privately circulated. Simultaneously Count Julius Audrassy announced that the Central Powers were agreed that Poland should never go back to Russia, that a new partion would be dangerous, and that she should form a political body with assured individuality as a state with a Polish government. This was confirmed in December, 1915, by a joint declaration of Baron

Burian and Bethmann-Hollweg. As we shall see, the consideration of the Austrian solution, and the discussion over it between the two Central Empires lasted more than a year before Germany finally vetoed it, declaring on November 5, 1916, to the Poles of the Kingdom of Poland, the establishment of a State of their own. From the first she viewed this Austrian solution with distrust, as checking her own development Eastwards, for it was a very different matter from creating a state which she herself could penetrate, easily riddling it in an economical and political, and, in spite of the fiasco she was about to experience with regard to recruiting, in a military sense. But it was objectionable to contemplate a new Kingdom of Poland, subject to a Habsburg prince, interposed in the eastward march of German influence. Much might be gained, no doubt, by the withdrawal of Polish representatives from the Reichsrat who would henceforth sit in the Diet of the new state, thus increasing German preponderance in the Reichsrat. Indeed, since the occupation of part of Russian Poland by Austria, many high Polish officials in Vienna had been drafted into the Administration of Poland, and their places had been taken by Germans, but Germany was uneasy about it all. Possibly Austria, with this

fresh accession of territory, and the chance of raising an army where Germany had failed, might assert an inconvenient independence of Berlin, whereas at present she was bound to her. For the dependence of Austria on Germany, her indissoluble Alliance, which amounts to exactly the same thing as her complete subjugation, was a thing not lightly to be risked.

But though the solution of the Polish question might wait, there was no reason why a revised system of taxes should do so, and by March, 1916, Germany was in receipt of a very handsome revenue from her occupied territory. The chief of these taxes were as follows:

(i.) She levied an annual contribution of about 50,000 roubles on many towns, as she had done in Belgium.

(ii.) She passed a regulation that every Pole over 15 years of age must take out an annual passport. For this various sums were charged up to five roubles a head, and this tax probably produced about 1,000,000 roubles.

(iii.) She levied a land-tax, a personal property tax, and an "ordinary" tax, pro-

ducing 34,000,000 roubles. (What the "ordinary" tax was, does not appear. Probably it was a tax on the right of individual existence.)

(iv.) She instituted additional taxes, i.e., stamp tax, dog tax, fire-arm tax, producing about 8,000,000 roubles.

(v.) She levied certain permanent monthly taxes on imports, etc.

(vi.) She insisted that sums due to Russian custom authorities from merchants in the occupied territory should be paid to her, otherwise the goods for which these duties were liable would be confiscated.

In fine, it was close on a year and a half after the occupation of Warsaw by the Germans that any sort of announcement was made by the Central Empires with regard to the constitution of Poland, and even when that came, as we shall see, the proposed national constitution was nothing more than an impotent conjugation of irreconcilable units who, incapable of legislation, could only quarrel among themselves. Here and there small local governments had been formed,

as for instance at Lodz, where Hindenburg, in July, 1916, instituted the following:

(i.) A municipal board of ten members, two of whom were Poles, the rest Jews or Germans.

(ii.) A municipal council of thirty-six, of whom twelve were Poles, twelve Jews, and twelve Germans.

Such a body, it will be agreed, did not do much for local Polish autonomy, since the Jews in Poland were notoriously pro-German. But then Germany was not "out" for doing much for Polish autonomy. Her main object during the first year of her occupation was to mark time and to await the developments of her military and other operations in Russia. She wanted to avoid trouble with the Poles, to avoid any measures that should conceivably weaken her grip and strengthen that of Austria, and, perhaps above all, to avoid anything that should tend to throw the Poles back into sympathy with Russia, as her forcible annexation of the country, or her partitioning it again between herself and Austria would have done. Probably (for Russia at that date was a long way from being beaten) she thought she

would be best employed in peaceful penetration, which facilitated business between the two countries.

She started a German Chamber of Commerce with its head-quarters at Warsaw, in order to encourage trade between Poland and Germany in a manner most profitable to the latter. Poles who wished to become members of it had first to give a guarantee of their German proclivities by subscribing to the War-Loan, or contracting for the German army; they then on payment of an annual subscription of 100 marks, could put their wares on the German market. That encouraged Poles to enter into relations with Germany, and Germany, entering into similar relations with Poland, flooded the country with hardware and other goods. She Germanized Warsaw, and a letter from a German resident there in 1916 proudly describes how every week it became more like a garrison town of the Fatherland. There was a government band which played in public, there were tennis clubs started, the population was vaccinated, a more sanitary drainage system was introduced, and many new German newspapers appeared. Vaccination and sporting clubs and drainage were, of course, amply looked after

in Warsaw before, and this account is but part of Germany's "make-up" as the deliverer of unhappy Poland from the barbarous conditions in which she had lived under Russian rule. Elsewhere, as at Bialystok, propagandist newspapers were printed in Polish, German and Yiddish * the latter for the sake of the large Jewish population there. There was a lack of bullion in Poland, for the Russians had broken into banks both there and in Galicia on their retreat, and had carried off what they could find, and so Germany introduced a worthless iron coinage, which obtained currency in a land wholly hemmed in by the armies of her and her allies. In order to confirm her grip she took over the administration of many Polish organizations, and closed others in order to withdraw the executive from native hands. This was not always a success, for, when in January, 1916, she closed the "Central Citizen Committee" in Warsaw, which regulated provisions, civic guard, Bureau for refugees, etc., the most abysmal confusion resulted, and she was forced to re-establish it again. But this time she put it in the hands

* Yiddish, it may be explained, is not Hebrew at all, as is popularly supposed, though it is printed in Hebrew characters. It is really a Swabian dialect, and 70 per cent. of the words in it are German. Its more scientific name is Judaeo-Germanic.

of Count Ronikier, one of her most reliable partisans.

Altogether there was plenty to do in the way of organization, in opening High Schools, in establishing banks, in bringing in notaries and lawyers from Germany, in abolishing Polish juries, in furthering propagandist campaigns, and though once or twice she had to instruct her police to watch Polish students at Warsaw, who might be dangerous, and send some to other educational establishments in Galicia, in Silesia and occasionally to prison, while as a further Germanizing measure she imported into the University German students, she did not bring any intolerable hand of oppression on the peoples of the occupied territories, and the instances of her introducing forced labour where her schemes for voluntary labour had failed, are the exception rather than the rule.* But, while the future was

* In certain districts, notably that of Kielce, there was a considerable amount of forced labour, for men were badly wanted to work in the unexploited mines there. Similarly we find that an appeal was made to the Pope in November, 1916, asking whether such compulsion was not an act of "intolerable tyranny." After a considerable delay His Holiness replied that "as a neutral" he could not interfere in such internal questions. But in spite of such instances we shall probably be right to conclude that Germany did not make forced levies for labour to any considerable extent.

still so uncertain, and the difficulties of any solution of the Polish question so immense, she delayed any decision on that point until she could give it exhaustive consideration. In the interval she let her fresh provinces enjoy such liberty as was not dangerous to her own grip, and considerably relaxed the rigour of her early days of occupation, for she did not want a rebellious population in the rear of her Eastern armies.

Lithuania, meantime, which the German armies had likewise overrun, was suffering under a far more rigid and tyrannical rule, for Germany had no notion when first she invaded it, that she would be able to retain it, but expected eventually to give it back to Russia; Poland, on the other hand, forming as it does a huge salient in the Eastern frontier of Germany, she and Austria alike were determined, if possible, never to allow to pass back under Russian rule. In the interval therefore, while Lithuania was in her hands, she determined to get as much out of it as she possibly could, and return it to Russia in a completely impoverished and disorganized condition. She had woods felled everywhere to supply her with timber, and compelled the peasants to give up to feed her armies the wheat which they had

stored for the spring sowing. The army of occupation was entirely supported by the starving country; all schools were closed except for the teaching of German, and the whole province was divided up into small districts, and the inhabitants forbidden to pass from one into another. Wholesale deportations were made for forced labour, and the peasants were sent to dig trenches in the firing line. All men in the government of Vilna, between the ages of 17 and 60, were called on to report themselves and be examined as to their fitness for work. It was possible for the more well-to-do to get exemption for six months, on payment of £30, which, it was announced, would be spent in procuring warm clothes for the workers and maintenance for their families. Similarly, with a view of getting all that could be squeezed out of the country, Germany raised money there directly, and we find the Governor of Vilna issuing a proclamation for a loan of a million roubles. It was to carry interest at the rate of 5 per cent., and to be paid off at par five years after the end of the war. Should this loan not be subscribed, the naive prospectus briefly announced that any deficiency would be made good by compulsion, and the money seized would neither carry interest nor be repaid at all. With the

same end in view, namely, that of giving back Lithuania in as troublous a condition as possible, she encouraged quarrels between the Bieloruski (White Russian) Committee, who demanded autonomy and separation from Russia, and the Union of Peasants, which demanded that the country should form part of Russia.

Equally marked and equally significant was her treatment of Lithuanian Jews. Whereas in Poland, which she hoped to retain, she removed the disabilities under which they had lived, and recognised their importance to herself as Germanizing agents, knowing how powerful and numerous they were (for they form 14½ per cent. of the entire population of the Kingdom of Poland, and the large majority of Polish trade passes through their hands) here in Lithuania, which at first she did not dream of being able to retain, she had no use for them except to get as much as she possibly could out of them. The most of the cash in the country was in their hands, and she resorted to a hundred tricks for getting hold of it, such as printing innumerable regulations about the tenure and lighting of houses, etc., in German only, and then fining the Jews, who could not read German, for breaking them. In the same way, when volunteers for labour in Germany did

not readily come forward, since labour in Germany meant working in munition factories, which was unlawful for Russian subjects, she invented out of those who did not offer themselves, a class of "suspicious persons," whom she forcibly expatriated. The hours of work were twelve per diem, with an elaborate system of fines and imprisonment for unpunctuality. Wages were 200 marks a month, which proved to be not so liberal since 100 marks per month were automatically deducted for board and lodging, by which was meant six feet of floor space in a barrack, and a small allowance for potatoes. Out of the remaining hundred marks, the workmen had to pay both German and Lithuanian taxes, which latter the Germans were kind enough to collect. What remained was then paid, not to the workman, but to his "community" in Lithuania, and was, on arrival there, confiscated by the military authorities. Thus Germany got her munition work done for the cost of board and lodging.

But as the months went on, and Russia showed no sign of a returning vigour that might snatch Lithuania again out of German hands, Germany began to consider what she would do with it in case she could retain it. In this connection an inspired utterance of that very astute politician,

Herr Gothein, published in the autumn of 1916, shortly before a constitution—of a kind—was granted to Poland, is of interest. After giving figures that show the increase of Poles in Prussian Poland, he says "If Poland should become an independent state, it would be desirable to assign her a special sphere for internal colonization, and for this purpose Lithuania and Courland would come under discussion."

Now, this has a two-fold significance. On the one hand it was put forth as a bait to Poland, for it hinted at the possibility of Lithuania being added to a Polish state (thus gratifying Polish Imperialistic ambitions), and on the other it shews that the creation of a large "independent" Poland formed at the expense of Russia, and in reality dependent on Germany was already under consideration in anticipation, it would seem, of the event that has since occurred, namely, the total collapse of Russia. Mittel-Europa, in fact, was broad awake, and its sagacity proved to be justified by what subsequently happened. For the collapse of Russia brought with it conditions more favourable than Germany could then have anticipated, for she never guessed how complete the collapse would be, and these conditions bear directly on her plans for Lithuania, which

at the present time (April, 1918) she certainly wants to retain under her direct control. There are two reasons for this, the first that the Ukraine is (in spite of its independence) in her hands, and Lithuania forms a convenient bridge to link it up with her. It was not therefore surprising to find the *Lokal-Anzeiger* inspired to say (March 9th) that Lithuania was not ripe for independence, since if left to herself, she would become dependent on Poland.

The second reason is that Lithuania forms a bridge to Courland, the Landesrat of which sent the following almost unanimous resolution to Berlin in March, 1918:—

> (i.) It asks the German Emperor to accept the Ducal Crown of Courland.
>
> (ii.) It wishes to connect Courland as closely as possible with Germany by conventions covering affairs of army, customs, trade, railway, coinage, and law.
>
> (iii.) It expresses a hope that all the Baltic country will be united politically with Germany.

On this the *Lokal Anzeiger* frankly says that if Courland wants to become part of Germany by

expressed self-determination, Lithuania must necessarily become German too. The Emperor, in reply to the Courland resolution, expressed his liveliest gratification at these flattering remarks, but with an unusual modesty did not actually accept either the Ducal Crown or the allegiance of Courland, though recognizing the re-created Dukedom of Courland, as a free and independent Dukedom, and assuring it of the protection of the German Empire. In other words, it looks as if what Germany is now contemplating is that her sphere of influence should embrace Courland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine. In this case, Austria would probably be given the greater part of the Kingdom of Poland, to unite with Galicia, while the rest would go to Germany. There are, at any rate, indications that this programme is favoured by Germany.

CHAPTER III

ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS

All this year then the occupying powers could come to no decision about the constitution of Poland, Austria made proposal after proposal, leaning towards the 'Austrian Solution,' to each of which Germany demurred, on the ground that any such arrangement would give too great a preponderance to her Ally. Also German opinion—that is to say, the opinion of the governing classes in Germany—was crucially divided. Bethmann-Hollweg, for instance, was in favour of transforming Poland into a sort of buffer-state between Russia (which was not yet disintegrated) and Germany, giving her some semblance of independence, but really placing her under the political and economical control of Berlin. To this arrangement Austria objected, as did also the more pronouncedly Junker party in Germany itself, which, under the lead of the Crown Prince and Hindenburg, preferred open annexation, not of Poland only, but of Lithuania and Courland.

Other 'orientations' in Germany favoured a fresh partition of the Kingdom of Poland, assigning to Germany some three millions of its inhabitants, and leaving the remainder to Austria. There would follow a fresh partition of Galicia, of which the Western part would go to Austria and the Eastern be joined on to the government of Cholm. This was tantamount to a fresh partition of Poland, to which Count Audrassy was (very rightly) opposed from the point of view of the Central Empires, saying that such an arrangement would but throw Poland back into Russian arms. From a military point of view the advantages of complete annexation, with this further partition, were to be found in the rectification of Germany's Eastern frontier, in which the Kingdom of Poland at present forms a huge salient; politically, it would result in the complete destruction of Polish nationality. On the other hand politicians who favoured the establishment of a new state dependent on Germany, argued that annexation would merely increase the influence of the Polish element in the German Empire, in which already there were incorporated 4,000,000 Poles. They therefore worked for a small weak Polish state, under the military and political control of Germany, the weakness of which would be accentuated

by the large number of Jews, to whom they would give a separate national existence, and use as Germanizing agents. Thus the danger of a strengthened Polish influence within the empire would be avoided, and Polish nationality would be gradually crippled. As a counterblast, as mild as the remote bleating of a sheep, against any arrangement of the sort being made, the Duma, with unconscious humour, proposed a complete dismemberment of Germany, and reiterated the meaningless phrase about the re-union of Poland, over which Russia had no longer the smallest control.

Poland, in fact, was being wooed by both the Central Empires, not so much, perhaps, as a desirable maiden, but as a fly that hovered between the webs of two spiders, and Austria, as a measure of enticement, ceded the district of Cholm back to Poland. But this scheme of uniting Galicia with Russian Poland, under a Habsburg regent was not, as we have seen, acceptable to Germany, particularly when Austria suggested that the Duchy of Posen should also become part of the new independent kingdom. There was a certain equity about the suggestion, for if Austria contributed Galicia, it was but reasonable that Germany should make some corresponding cession. But Germany was not on the look-out for equitable

arrangements: she foresaw that it would be necessary to grant some sort of constitution to the occupied territory, and very likely to throw in the adjective 'independent,' but the independence that she designed connoted a dependence on herself, and as largely as possible a measure of independence with respect to Austria. She did not, either, look with any favour on Austria's selection of a regent, for Austria had tentatively selected the Archduke Charles, who had married his two daughters to Polish nobles, namely, Prince Dominic Radziwill and Prince Czartoryski, and himself lived in Galicia, spoke Polish and was of strong Polish sympathies. So from time to time she threw out the name of a German candidate, suggesting, for instance, Prince Leopold of Bavaria and Prince Eitel Friedrich, the Kaiser's second son. Once during the summer of 1916, Germany apparently made up her mind on a compromise, and settled to proclaim Prince Leopold as regent and to accept the rest of the Austrian solution with him as counter-weight, and the Chancellor went to Vienna to conclude matters, in the hope that Germany would be able to raise at least half a million men for her armies on the enthusiasm aroused by this proclamation. But the Emperor Franz Joseph roundly told him that

such an arrangement would cause an insurrection in Poland, and Germany had to yield. In fact a German prince on the throne of Poland was as unacceptable to Austria as an Austrian prince to Germany, or either an Austrian or German prince to the national sentiment of Poland. Indeed, the solution as to the choice of a regent for Poland has not yet been solved, and is likely to remain insoluble, unless some military or internal crisis tightens Germany's grip on Austria, who may then be forced to accept a German nominee.

On the other hand, though the joining of Galicia to Poland, under a Habsburg regent, who at any rate would be more acceptable to a Catholic country * than any one whom Germany could suggest, would give a preponderating influence to Austria in Polish affairs, Germany saw that certain equalizing adjustments might be made here. Since the new state would have a large measure of autonomy, it was only reasonable that the Poles who

* Too much stress, however, must not be laid on the force of religious conviction in Poland, as the following incident shews. General von Beseler made an order not long ago that German should be used as the language of instruction in Protestant schools in Warsaw, since Germany claimed as German, children who were of the German and not of the Polish national creed. A certain Dr. Machlejd, a pastor of Lutheran theology, protested against this, and pointed out that if it was insisted on, it would be perfectly easy for the children to become Roman Catholics.

sat in the Reichsrat should sit there no longer, for the Polish membership would be localized in the Senate or Diet (or whatever form of Government the "Austrian Solution" should give to Poland), and Germany foresaw an accession of seats in the Reichsrat that would increase her preponderance there over Czechs and Slovenes. But against the increased preponderance of the German element in the Reichsrat must be set the fact that with the establishment of the new state Poland-cum-Galicia, the Reichsrat, instead of representing half the Dual Monarchy would for the future represent only a third. More than once during this year she came near to accepting some sort of Austrian Solution, always providing that there should be no question of her giving up any part of Germany at all, as a compensation for Austria's loss of Galicia. Indeed, she could not accept the formula "los von Galizien": she referred to it as the acquisition of Poland. Germany, in fact, during the whole of this period was cudgelling her brains for a solution that would be wholly favourable to herself.

A point on which the two Central Empires were quite agreed—indeed, this is the only point on which they were agreed as regards the future of Poland—was that it must never again come within

the sphere of Russian influence. While Russia was still a power to be reckoned with, Germany contemplated a Poland with some vague measure of autonomy and possibly even a Poland with access to the Baltic, not, it is hardly necessary to say, the Dantzig access, but an access through Courland. Some sort of buffer state, leaning on her, with a function similar to what she would desire to establish in Belgium with respect to France, was not inacceptable to her as existent between her and Russia. Lithuania and the northern part of the Kingdom of Poland would answer the purpose. Austria would have liked precisely the same thing, but in this case the Kingdom of Poland and Galicia would make the buffer for her, while Germany wanted the buffer further north. Both were agreed (or so it seems) on having a Poland with some sort of nominal independence interposed between them and the power that they then still feared, but they kept shifting the proposed site of this bolster like uneasy bedfellows. Furthermore, Germany was in the fortunate position of a potential blackmailer; her armies had already saved Austria from what, but for her, would have been an irresistible Russian advance through Galicia, and Russia was still powerful and coherent enough to advance there again.

Should that occur, and should Germany refuse to threaten the Russian right flank, as she had done before, Austria would be in a very uncomfortable place indeed. The defeat of Austria, no doubt, would seriously menace Germany in this case, but Austria's "turn" would come first. This constituted a decent blackmailing case with regard to the disposition of the bolster.

Given some settlement of that, they were both determined in unbreakable harmony that Russia should not have a friend in Poland. True to her dilatory nature which has always locked the stable-door long after the horse has been stolen, Russia who, up till the last moment when she was finally swept out of Poland had always had the opportunity of appearing desirous to substantiate the Grand Duke Nicholas' promise on behalf of the Crown, and of feeding the horse while it was in the Russian stable, began to show it—only show it—bushels of oats after it had been stolen, and had passed out of the stable altogether. What prompted this belated exhibition of oats was the action of M. Dmowski on behalf of the Polish national Committee in Petrograd. As leader of the National Democrats, he determined to bring pressure on Russia by means of enlisting the sympathy of the Western Entente powers for Po-

land, went to Paris and presented a memorandum to M. Isvolsky, the Russian Ambassador there. The chief points in this were—

(i) It is in the interest of all the nations menaced by Germany to reunite the dismembered portions of Poland in one free state, and to give it complete liberty to organize its national forces and oppose them to the German peril.

(ii) The Poles, who form a people more numerous and more advanced than any of the smaller nationalities of Central Europe and the Balkans, have the same right as they to be an independent national state, and they cannot in conscience renounce this right which has been recognised by all the other nationalities.

(iii) By recognising this right Russia and her Allies would arouse the enthusiasm and suppress at the same time the suspicion of other nationalities who are solicitous for their independence, and who would all then rise against Germany.

The precise application of this last clause is not very apparent (it refers, I imagine, to Balkan

states), but this memorandum and the action of M. Dmowski in enlisting the sympathies of Paris and London much impressed the Russian Government, and in especial Sazonoff, who thought it was necessary for Russia to settle the Polish question at once on Russian lines, for fear of its becoming an international question. Towards the end of April, accordingly, he presented a memorandum to the Tsar, urging that the Polish question should be determined without delay, since not only Germany and Austria were preparing a solution of it, but the Western powers of the Entente were also being interested in it. With this memorandum Sazonoff presented the Tsar with a project for Polish autonomy.

In July, 1916, this project of Polish autonomy was discussed in a Ministerial Council at Petrograd, and the idea of a Poland unconnected with Russia was dismissed as impossible. Of all the Cabinet at Petrograd at that date, Sazonoff was the only man who realised that to win Polish allegiance back for Russia it was necessary not only to make promises but to do something as earnest of their fulfilment, such as the amelioration of the misery of the Poles then in Russia, or to make some solemn reiteration on the part of Russia with regard to Polish independence. His mo-

tives seem to have been those of a keen Russian nationalist, desirous of gratifying Polish aspirations in order to secure Poland's adhesion to Russia, and at the same time to prevent the Polish question becoming an international interest. At this Council he came to loggerheads with Stürmer, whose sympathies with Germany were notorious, and who, in opposition to Sazonoff's policy, persuaded the Tsar to take no definite step at all in the Polish question, thus playing the German game and helping to alienate Polish sympathies from Russia altogether. The upshot was that Sazonoff sent in his resignation or, as there is good reason to believe, was dismissed, and Germany scored another signal victory, from the Mittel-Europa point of view, in the retention of Stürmer, a German agent, in the Russian Cabinet.

At once a reactionary tendency set in in Russia: it was argued (here was the voice of Stürmer) that the Russian military situation was excellent, and that Germany was weakening. As a corollary it followed that the proposed union of Poland (i.e. the formation of an independent kingdom consisting of German, Austrian and Russian Poland) was of no profit to Russia: Russia would have united Poland only to lose Poland.

This view, of course, finally disposed of any significance that could be attached to the Grand Duke's proclamation. It had resulted in nothing hitherto: now it was simply torn to shreds. "*We have been led into this war,*" said Stürmer's voice, "*against our national interests.*" That one sentence gives the measure of the German penetration into Russia, hitherto unsuspected, and not recognised even then.

So, under German dictation, the friendly hands which Russia seemed to desire to put out to Poland, though long after the time for such mere gesture was past, were covered with German gloves, and held the dagger which should stab the very heart of all real Polish national sentiment. On August 12th, 1916, there was circulated a private draft concerning the constitution of Poland, which was a miracle of efficient composition, seeing that its object was to alienate the Poles from Russia. The provisions in it that are of interest are the following—

(i) A united Kingdom of Poland to be formed with its own Diet.

(ii) Questions concerned with the interests of all subjects of the Tsar, including Poles, to

be decided by the Imperial Houses of Parliament.

(iii) The state language of United Poland to be Polish. Russian to be taught in schools.

(iv) Frontiers of the new Polish state to be determined after the war.

Surely there was the German leaven beginning to work. None knew better than she that this sort of thing was the precise and perfect way of alienating Poland from Russia, and embittering Polish feeling: she could not have drafted a more satisfactory proposal herself at Berlin. It promised nothing except a Diet, the functions of which were left entirely vague. For all that was said, the legislation of the Diet might be overruled by the Duma or the Cabinet or the Tsar. Poles were included among the subjects of the Tsar, and questions relating to them were to be settled at Petrograd: no frontiers of the new independent state (which by these very provisions was completely dependent on Russia) were so much as indicated. Russia was preparing to hang herself in the rope that Germany gave her. But Germany was in no hurry, and gave Russia some more rope to ensure a longer drop.

It was worth waiting, for in October, 1916, Russia had fixed on her neck the longer rope. This time a Nationalist member of the Duma, called Tchikatchov, propounded a scheme for Polish autonomy, which was published and submitted to the Russian Government. It suggested that—

(i) The limits of Russia should be defined, lest Russia, "swallowing Poland, should be poisoned by her." White Russia and Little Russia must be independent of Poland.

(ii) A danger to be averted is the influence of Poles, whether German, Austrian or Jewish, on Russia.

(iii) Russia must be "at home" in Poland, and the Russian language must be used in public utterances.

(iv) All official positions in Poland must be filled by Poles, but no official positions in Russia must be filled by them.

(v) The Secretary of State for Poland must be a Russian.

(vi) Cholm and Eastern Galicia must be excluded from Poland, and belong to Russia.

Now is it possible to conceive a better *mise-en-scene* for a German declaration of independence for Poland than these amazing Russian utterances? Both received favourable consideration from the Russian Government, and between them (given that Russia in the event of her victory over Germany embodied them in a constitution for Poland) they left no shadow or semblance of independence at all. Poles might fill official posts in Poland, but they would no longer be able to occupy any position at all in Russia. Their seats in the Duma would be taken from them, and whatever conclusions they came to as to the government of Poland (whatever "Poland" might prove to be when its frontiers were defined) would be referred to the decision of the Duma, since Poles were still subjects of the Tsar, and Poles would no longer have seats in the Duma. The Secretary of State was to be a Russian, and in effect this scheme for the independence of Poland merely deprived the Poles of their seats in the Imperial Parliament. All decisions of the Polish Diet were to be referred to Petrograd, and instead of gaining liberties, they would but sacrifice any such liberties as they previously had. It is precisely as if Ireland were to lose her seats at Westminster and have a separate Parliament of her own, the

legislation of which, before it took effect, would have to be referred to Westminster. Already, also, Cholm had been given back to the Poles by Austria; now this scheme confiscated it again. It is impossible to imagine a more signal triumph for German influence than this, for of all Russia's century of political imbecility with regard to Poland, here was the very flower and felicity.

So Germany had not lost much by her year of waiting before she began to take any practical measures concerning the future constitution of Poland. She had on the contrary enabled Poland to see with devastating clearness that even if the Russian armies (as seemed highly improbable) gained a smashing victory over Germany, the Poles must not expect anything from the conqueror. She had, too, by October, 1916, blackmailed Austria into abandonment, as an official programme, of the Austrian solution, and by this year of waiting she had caused to spring up in Poland many shades of feeling, which formed themselves into parties, negligible for the most part, and divided among themselves. With regard to them, she could reflect with cynical truth that there was "safety in numbers." But solid against her, and she knew it, was Polish national sentiment which underlay all the bickering little

parties into which Poland was split up. What would have satisfied all parties (and nothing else would have satisfied them all) would have been the creation of a real united and independent Poland, at the idea of which Germany could laugh, not in her sleeve but quite openly. What probably added resonance to her laughter was the public and official utterances of the notorious Protopopoff in Paris during this month, which certainly were humorous, considering the frankness with which the Russian Government had declared its intentions. He announced that "a great Poland will arise, which will unite all the Poles, Russian, German and Austrian. It will be a Poland enjoying its own government, its own Parliament and its own language. This must happen, because it is the wish of the whole of Russia." There was never a more irresponsible and futile utterance, and it deceived nobody.

Simultaneously, in prompt contradiction, came a semi-official utterance from Russia, proclaiming that "never will the Russian people consent that a span of Russian earth should return to Poland, or an orthodox Russian submit to even a shadow of Polish authority. And Stürmer, then Minister of the Interior, issued a regulation prohibiting the evacuated population of Poland, Lithuania and

the Baltic provinces from using Polish at public meetings. There could scarcely have been framed a completer comment on Russia's benevolent intentions, and on her sympathy with Poland, and with Poland's national aspirations.

Germany could hardly do more than say "Amen"; her prayer was answered, and Russia had hanged herself. And since no one else seemed inclined to proclaim the independence of Poland, she proceeded with infinite irony and the fervent consent of the All-Highest to do it herself. This proclamation was issued by the Central Empires on November 5th, 1916.

All this year the famine in Poland had continued and Germany had taken no steps to relieve it, for she hoped to encourage Polish emigration to smiling, welcoming Germany by its means. In the same way, when the citizens of Warsaw sent a petition to von Beseler that factories should be reopened, he replied that anybody could get work in Germany. At this time 47 per cent. of the population of Warsaw were dependent on relief.

CHAPTER IV

POLISH INDEPENDENCE (MADE IN GERMANY)

In this proclamation of a Polish state made jointly at Warsaw in the name of the Central Empires there was a provision attached that the Poles should raise an army to defend it. Poland, being now "protected" and proclaimed a state by Germany, must be defended against Russia, the common foe, and in consequence this defensive army would form part of the armies of the Central Empire. This was convenient, for Germany needed men, and since in the proclamation of the new State she gave nothing away with regard to the liberties or independence to be granted it, she hoped to raise fresh troops without loosing a little finger hold on Poland. She wanted troops against Russia, and hoped that Poland would furnish them. The idea was not devoid of cunning, but as so often happens with cunning ideas, it lacked perception, and was based on an uncomprehending stupidity.

The proclamation was followed up four days

later by another joint proclamation bidding the citizens of the new State to enrol themselves in the army, and the Governor-Generals of Warsaw and Lublin, von Beseler and Kuk, as directors of recruiting, issued manifestos declaring that "In order to secure for the Polish army the position of belligerents, it will for the time being be included in the German Army." But the citizens of the new state, instead of responding to the call, began to ask themselves whether they were enlisting in a National army or in a German Army, for the phrase "for the time being" seemed to call for elucidation. If it was a National army for the defence of their new independent state there must be a government of that state, and a military department for the organization of the army. In fact, there were four demands which must be met before the new state could feel sure that it was asked to furnish recruits for a National army and not for a German army. These preliminary necessities were as follows:

(i) A head of the new state, in whom shall be invested supreme authority, must be appointed.

(ii) The spheres of occupation of the Ger-

man and Austrian control must be abolished before the State can come into existence.

(iii) Some national Council of the State must be appointed to draft its constitution.

(iv) There must be a Military department to organize the new Army.

In a word (the logic of which is irrefutable) you cannot have an army to defend a state, before that army has a state to defend. A state postulates by the very meaning of the word, a constitution and laws. Create the state, and after that it is time to think of creating an army to defend it.

With regard to the proclamation of the state of Poland, out of all the parties and cliques that composed that state only two voices raised themselves in its favour. The first was that of the notoriously pro-German "Club of the Polish State," * a very

* The *Czas,* the leading Cracow paper, remarks with regard to this Club, "it ought to be remembered that the Club of the Polish State works with the idea of basing the existence of the Polish State on a connection with Germany, that it conducts an active propaganda in Warsaw in favour of that programme." It is equally strongly anti-Russian, for in September, 1916, we find it passing a resolution that the Central Empires will permit certain measures which will allow the Poles "to take an active part in the struggle against Russia."

small group which sent, under the signature of its President, Studnicki, a very pleasant telegram to the Kaiser. Studnicki, it may be remarked, had been throughout a specimen of the rare pro-German Pole. Subsequently, in March, 1918, he published a manifesto in the *Narod i Panstwo* declaring that Poland must lean on Germany "for we can only consolidate our forces with the help of the German occupation." The following are extracts from Studnicki's telegram.

> "Great Monarch! On this day of joy for the Polish nation, when it learns it will be free, the hearts of freedom-loving Poles are full of gratitude for those who by their blood have liberated them. . . .
>
> "The victories of Thine invincible arms have given (us) liberation from the Russian yoke of our two capitals, equally dear to the Polish heart. Warsaw and Vilna . . .
>
> "We know that in all this is Thy will, Highest Lord, that the governing faith of those historic events is the strength of Thy spirit . . ."

Here, the inclusion of Vilna as a "Polish capital" is interesting. The Club of the Polish State

foresaw a further benefit in store, which has not at present been permitted to materialize, namely, the union of Lithuania with Poland. There was a certain ground for this aspiration since at the capture of Vilna by the Germans, Pfeil, in command of the German troops, proclaimed that he considered Vilna a Polish town. But the German government did not agree with him.

The other note of congratulation was in the Cracow paper *Czas,* the organ of the pro-Austrian Conservative party. It sees the act of God (probably "Gott") in the proclamation and adds,

> "On the spot from which the victorious sword has driven out Russia, the invader and oppressor, appears now, on the map of Europe the inscription 'Poland'."

Naturally the German press swelled into a perfect chorus of Lobgesang, exclaiming that while the Entente vented high talk and Pecksniffian ejaculations about the rights and liberties of small nations to a national existence, magnanimous Germany alone had acted instead of talking, and had freed a down-trodden nation from the yoke of Russian oppression.

But apart from these two instances a universal

chorus of discontent went up from every section of Polish politics. M. Roman Dmowski, leader of the National Democrats, and of the Polish party in the Duma, issued a manifesto on their behalf, calling attention to these points:—

(i) The Polish Nation is one and indivisible. Its aspirations can not be content without the reunion of partitioned territory.

(ii) The proposed creation of a Polish state formed only of occupied territories of a single part of Poland merely confirms the partition of the country.

(iii) Without making definite pledges as to the rights and prerogatives of the kingdom, the Central Empires only emphasize its dependence on them. In return they require the Poles to furnish an army.

(iv) This army is to be sent into battle to defend a cause which is not Poland's, and is subordinated to Germany and Austria.

(v) The military projects of Germany and Austria are disastrous for Poland.

A large meeting of peasants, usually an unorganized body of opinion, was held at Lodz, de-

manding (i.) an immediate constitution for the state; (ii) the appointment of a King of ancient Polish lineage, who should be a Catholic, should speak Polish, and be the supreme commander of the Polish army, to be formed for the defence of the state. In the Duma, as was natural, the Polish Club, with Harusewicz as spokesman, denounced the German proclamation, saying that all true Poles repudiated it entirely. Though German propaganda announced enthusiasm over it among Poles in Paris, the Poles there, as a matter of fact (largely National Democrats), passed a resolution condemning it. The Central Committee of the Polish Socialist party did the same, making specific demands about the appointment of a Diet, with a view to summoning which a provisional Government must be appointed, composed of democratic elements. They were willing to defend Poland against Russia, but Germans and Austrians could not call them to arms. Peasants in Lublin followed the example of Lodz, and presented a similar petition to Kuk, the Governor-General, who found nothing better to say than that he saw with joy that the peasants took an interest in the building of the state. In the United States an enormous demonstration was held, representing the four million Poles there,

declaring the proclamation to be a strategic move on the part of Germany, and protesting (i) against the formation of a Polish army to help Germany, (ii.) against a pretended Polish government which is merely an instrument in German hands, and (iii.) against a new partition of Poland. The Realist party, consisting of landowners, similarly rejected it, claiming an independent Poland (though in 1914 they had accepted autonomy under Russia) and declared that the proclamation of a belligerent cannot constitute a solution of the question. In Switzerland, the Poles expressed their sentiments about the proclamation by a manifesto of which the following is the key—"The 'rights' of the independent Kingdom of Poland under German auspices seem to be the right to die for Germany." Even Lednicki, a supporter of the German solution, was a patriot on paper for a moment, and issued a manifesto that "Poland proclaims her standpoint, unmindful of German bayonets."

Without further multiplication of such views, which were accompanied by expressions of loss of confidence in the promises of the Entente powers, it is sufficient to say that never were so many different political parties in Poland united over any question as over their repudiation of the Ger-

man proclamation of the State and the consequent (November 9th) attempt to raise a Polish army to fight German battles. This attempt may be dismissed very shortly with the statement that instead of the army of 700,000 or 800,000 men whom Germany hoped to recruit, she succeeded, during the next two months in enlisting 1,800 men, of whom 1,200 proved to be physically unfit, from the effect of a year's starvation. Six hundred, in fact, were all the efficient support that she was able to raise. Even the *Czas,* which had shown some enthusiasm over the proclamation of the Polish State could not support the idea of an army raised for the defence of the State, before the State had any existence, and said "There can be no army without a Government. Some way must be found whereby the Polish nation can initiate and direct the formation of a Polish army." Even in highly-censored Germany, the true nullity of this declaration of Independence, was recognized, and we find Herr Max Weber neatly summarizing it in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of February 25th, 1917. He says "(the Central Empires) issued an unactionable promissory note with no definite contents in favour of a beneficiary who had not yet attained a corporate existence."

The almost unanimous reception accorded to

these two schemes made it clear to the German authorities that some sort of Polish government must come into existence, and four days later an order was issued for the establishment of a government which was neither more nor less than a swindle. Unfortunately, it was an obvious swindle. The Government was to take the form of a Diet and a Council of State, and the provisions were as follows:—

(i.) The Diet is to consist of seventy members belonging to the German sphere of occupation, and to be appointed by the Town Councils of Warsaw and Lodz.

(ii.) This Diet will appoint eight members of the Council of State, and four more will be nominated by the Governor-General of Warsaw, who will also appoint its Chairman.

(iii.) The language to be used both in Diet and Council is to be Polish.

Now, so far there seems to be a certain "Polishness" about the new Government, which vanishes cleanly and completely when we consider the proposed functions of the Diet and of the Council of State, for—

(iv.) The Council of State is to discuss matters submitted to it by the Governor-General, and to "possess an initiative in legislation."

(v.) The Diet is to discuss matters submitted to it by the Governor-General, and have powers of taxation.

The Governor-General, in fact, provides subjects of discussion for the two bodies, but is under no obligation to accept their conclusions. One of these bodies, the Council of State may "initiate legislation," a phrase utterly meaningless, since no provision is made for the completion of such legislation. In other words, neither body has any powers at all, and their only functions are to converse on subjects indicated to them by the Governor-General.

This led to a protest from the Poles, who independently formed a Provisional National Council in Warsaw, consisting (according to the original scheme) of 81 members, of whom Warsaw contributed 41. They ignored the Diet and Council of State as set up by the Germans, and demanded that.

(i.) The Council of State shall be formed

on an understanding with parties in the National Council.

(ii.) The Council of State shall have legislative power and a voice in military affairs.

(iii.) A Regent from a friendly Roman Catholic dynasty shall be appointed.

(iv.) The Council of State shall consist of 20 members, 12 from the German territory of occupation and 8 from the Austrian. Of these only one shall be appointed by the Governor-General.

These proposals, put forth by the Polish self-appointed National Council in two successive demands, were admitted, and in this fact we can find a certain significance. Germany had to recognize the National Council, and thus the Poles got a certain real voice in the making of the Constitution which they did not enjoy under the original German scheme. Probably also pressure was put on her ally by Austria, the official press of which country had entirely ignored the first declaration, since it implied the total abandonment of the "Austrian Solution," and the only announcements given of it in the unofficial press were derived from Berlin.

Thereupon, with a slight modification of numbers, the Provisional Council of State, to which National Democrats, Realists, and Social Democrats refused to belong, came into existence. It consisted of 25 instead of 20 members, 10 for the sphere of Austrian occupation, and 15 for the German. Its functions, however, were prescribed by the occupying powers, and were to all intents and purposes as barren as according to the first German promulgation, running as follows:

(i.) The Council is to be summoned by the two Emperors. When a vacancy occurs it shall be filled up by them, on the order of the Governors-General.

(ii.) Both Governors-General are at liberty to send representatives to the Council to get opinions or to give explanations. They are allowed to speak whenever they desire.

(iii.) Representatives of the Empires are to speak in German: Poles in Polish.

(iv.) The Council is to make proposals about the administration.

(v.) It is to co-operate with the Allied powers in the formation of an army.

In other words, the Council was only to meet when summoned by the two Emperors, either of whom apparently had the power of proroguing it *sine die*. When it was summoned, the only powers it possessed were those of discussion, and therefore as far as constitutional functions go, it might just as well not meet at all.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, there were, apart from the supporters of the National Democrats, who refused to sit in the Council of State altogether, some eighteen or nineteen parties, most of whom consisted of a mere handful of men, and in consequence the wranglings over the appointment of the Council of State were likely to prove interminable. General von Beseler, after urging conciliation and speed, without success, finally (in January, 1917) issued an ultimatum that the Council of State must be complete in 24 hours, and apparently it was. In this Council the National Democrats, the Realists, and the Social Democrats refused to take part, though Pilsudski, who had raised the Polish legions (of whom presently) said he would not enter the Council without them. Since Germany's own appeal for raising recruits had proved such a complete fiasco, she knew that the only man who could possibly obtain recruits for them was this very

remarkable person. He had great influence with the younger generation and among the working-class, and represented the class of Polish patriotism that was directed against Russia. For these reasons, the Germans considered him essential to their plans, and eventually they succeeded in getting him, without the inclusion in the Council of State of the party for which he had bargained, since the National Democrats absolutely refused to enter it without such rearrangements of seats as would give them and their affiliated groups a predominant vote. Finally also the Jewish element was included in this futile Council, which strengthened the sadly deficient pro-German sympathies of it.

The Council of State opened; von Beseler and Kuk, the Governors of Warsaw and Lublin first spoke, and their joint speech from the throne was replied to by the chairman, Niemojewski, hitherto unknown as a politician. After that no progress of any sort was made, and we learn from *Die Post* of January 6th, that the principal Polish parties will not co-operate, and this is followed by a lament that in spite of Germany's exertions on behalf of Poland, Poland will not be her friend. The truth was that the Poles knew very well that this Council of State created by Germany was a sham,

constructed and opened merely with the pretence of granting the Constitution which Poland demanded as an essential first step that must be taken before the raising of a national army, which the Poles declared must be an army for the defence of the state, but which Germany designed to fight her own battles. Poland, as a whole, wanted independence and self-government, what it found it had got was a constitution without power, and the privilege of dying for Germany. This was openly asserted by Pilsudski, to whom Germany looked to raise the army, and he announced in the Council that Germany had created the Polish State in order to raise a Polish army for herself.

A semi-official admonishment to the Poles that supplies a significant comment on opinion in Germany appeared in the *Kölnische Zeitung* of January 15th, 1917. It remarks that though it is only two months since Poland was liberated, doubts as to the success of this have arisen in Germany. It is necessary for German frontiers to be secured against Russia, on conclusion of peace, but she cannot simply annex Poland. Independent Poland has therefore been created, but the main condition for its success is that it should have a close connection with Germany and her Allies, and its

army with the armies of the Quadruple Alliance. The danger lies in the existence of Polish Nationalism which is bound to arouse the spirit of irredentism. The acquisition of German Poland and access to the sea are naturally part of the Polish ideal, but since Germany can never entertain such an idea these aspirations must be given up once and for all. As long as the war lasts, Poland must be content to be in German occupation. Poland can only prosper under German and Austrian protection, and the Poles must see to it that they use their rights in a way corresponding to German interests, for both Germans and Poles know that it was not sheer humanitarianism that called the new state into life, but the consideration of important political interests. The right thing for the Poles to do is to give up, once for all, their irredentist claims on Prussian territory, and stake their lives on a victory of German arms.

Similar exhortations appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Rheinisch Westfälische Zeitung,* urging the necessity of holding Poland firmly in German Grip and strengthening the interests of German Kultur.

Now this extract sums up the exact *impasse* between the *"independent"* state and its German rulers. Germany insists that the whole well-being

of Poland depends on its German orientation—no mention of Austria occurs at all—and that to stand well with Germany it must prove its devotion by the shedding of its blood in the cause of Germany.* It has to take Germany on trust, blind, identify itself with German aims, give up all its aspirations, and revel in its independence! For its own peace of mind it had better dismiss once and for all any idea of becoming a united Poland, if by unity is meant a "German solution" implying the joining to it of Posen, in the same way as under an "Austrian solution." Galicia would have been united to it. But as a counter-attraction to this unrealizable programme we find the Council of State permitted to issue a manifesto declaring that one of its chief tasks is to "extend the independent state-existence to all the territories taken away from Russia, and gravitating towards Poland." In other words, if Germany was determined not to give back any part of Prussian Poland, she might be induced to promise that some of the Russian territories once belonging to

* About this time the National Democrats issued the following proclamation about enlistment in German armies:—"Poles, brothers, you are being forced to enlist. If you do not wish to draw down on your heads the curse of an entire nation, if you wish to preserve the spotless purity of your emblem, the White Eagle, do not play the part of German conspirators."

Poland should be reunited to her. This change of subject suited Germany very well; by all means let the Council of State amuse itself by dreams of enlarging Poland at the expense of Russia. That would make bad blood between Poles and Russians, and, according to the German formula, the more bad blood between other countries the better. Professor Romer, the Cracow geographer, joined in the chorus against Russia, conducted by Germany, and produced figures to disprove Russian statistics which gave the Polish population of Lithuania as 1,000,000, whereas he claimed 5,000,000 as inhabitants of it. It is more than possible that the Russian estimate is below the mark, but when we find that Gustav Olechowski, himself a Polish Nationalist, only claims 1,500,000 Poles as inhabiting Lithuania, we must conclude that the Russian estimate is nearer the mark than Professor Romer's. He seems to have arrived at his calculation by including as Poles all Roman Catholics on the ground of a common religion. The assumption is picturesque, but has nothing to do with fact. Similarly the Polish right to annex Volhynia was put forward on the ground that owing to the emigration of Russians eastwards, the population now was mainly Polish.

These claims and others like them on Russian

provinces called forth a protest from the Government at Petrograd and the most violent counter-blast from the Lithunian Nationalists, who declared that the Poles were their worst enemies. It is probable that Germany instigated those Imperialist demands, with the object not only of fomenting ill-feeling between Russia and Poland, in which it perfectly succeeded, but of giving the National Council something to occupy it, so as to distract it from its real business of drafting the Constitution. This succeeded also, and up till March, 1917, the Council, apart from starting schools for officers, seems to have accomplished nothing except to settle what the official seal of the new state was to be, and to approve of the establishment of a Committee of National Contribution, the first aim of which was to raise money for the Polish army.

The parties for complete Polish independence, with the union of territories now belonging to Russia, Austria and Germany, though they were quite incapable of getting independence, grew in numbers and weight during this period. The cynical farce of Polish government, the recruiting of Poles for industrial work in Germany, and their forcible detention there, the measures introduced by Germany for compulsory work for Poles in Posen, the

census ordered by Germany for all men in the occupied territories between the ages of 17 and 50, which the Poles construed into a foreshadowing of conscription, the continued refused of Germany to appoint a Regent, were rapidly bringing resentment to a head, and Germany, who had been so successful in inspiring Polish distrust of Russia, was diverting the main flow of suspicion against herself.

Then in March the Russian revolution broke out, and on the 29th of that month the revolutionary Russian Government definitely proclaimed the independence of Poland (which was a very different thing from the meaningless phrases of the Grand Duke's proclamation) and asked in return for a "free military union" with the country to which it promised liberty. In other words, Russia like Austria and Germany made a bid for the support of a Polish army. To this reiterated promise of independence the Council of State sent a cool reply, congratulating Russia on the liberty that she, too, had regained, but reminding her that the Central Empires had also promised Poland independence. But on the population generally the effect of this Russian proclamation was wildly exciting: Russia, democratic and free, stretched out an equal and fraternal hand, and they vented

their enthusiasm in strikes and anti-German disturbances. The Council of State, however, had taken a truer view of the value of the Russian declaration, for the nature of the "free military union" was soon hinted at by the new Russian Government, who elegantly alluded to the fact that there were a very large number of Polish refugees in Russia (there were probably upwards of 1,000,000 of them, of whom 500,000 were between the ages of 17 and 45.* Most of these, up to the age of 37 at any rate, had already enlisted in the Russian armies, and what was aimed at by the "free military union" referred to the time after the war, when Russia hoped, in spite of the independence of Poland, to retain a considerable number of Poles in her military forces.

The disenchantment spread, and before long it was felt that this declaration of independence would probably prove as nugatory as previous Russian declarations. But, in any case, Russia now, in chaos herself, had abandoned all claim to any suzerainty over Poland, and perhaps the most important result of the proclamation was that at this precise moment the National Demo-

* This large percentage was due to the fact that it was chiefly able-bodied men who fled into Russia at the time of the retreat of her armies in 1915.

cratic party, who had previously accepted the Grand Duke Nicholas's proclamation, which implied the restoration of German and Austrian Poland to a kingdom, independent, but under Russian suzerainty, expanded their aspirations and claimed for the future Kingdom of Poland much of the territory originally belonging to Poland which had passed to Russia in consequence of the partitions.

To quiet the growing disgust with Germany, von Beseler made a journey to Berlin, and returned with the German Government's consent that a Regent should be established, *but* (this "but" was a familiar feature in German indulgences) they had not yet arrived at agreement "with regard to the person of the Regent." This, of course, again postponed the appointment of a Regent *sine die,* and rendered meaningless the further promise that the Germans were resolved to leave Warsaw as soon as the Regency had been established in such a way that the zones of German and Austrian occupation came under his authority. In other words, though they were resolved to appoint a Regent and thereupon leave Warsaw, they intended to remain in possession because (in spite of their resolve) they could not settle on a Regent. Austria had designated a Habsburg Re-

gent, and Germany a Hohenzollern: the appointment of either would remove Poland too far away from the "sphere" of the other power, and therefore Poland must wait. But this message from Berlin, delivered by von Beseler, is of interest, because it shows that there was still some sort of vitality in the policy of the "Austrian solution," or, if not vitality, the force of inert resistance. If it could not create, it could veto. Next month (June, 1917), after a further ineffectual protest from the Council of State and a threat of resignation, the German and Austrian Governments both reaffirmed their desire to appoint a Regent. Neither could do it without the consent of the other, and it served the purposes of both to give no effective government to Poland. They agreed, in fact, to differ, since their differing effected the point on which they were perfectly agreed. For the same reason the joint resolution of the Polish Deputies in the Reichsrat and of the Diet of Galicia for Polish unification with access to the sea was the mere tap of a ripple against a stone breakwater. Austria would certainly have granted that at the expense of Germany, but could refer to Germany even as Mr. Spenlow referred to the obduracy of his partner Jorkins. The Central Empires, though they might disagree

with each other, were unanimous in disregarding any obligation they had entered into with regard to Poland. Austria would not give way to Germany, nor Germany to Austria, and as far as Poland was concerned, this disagreement postponed any solution of the political *impasse*.. All the time famine was raging in Russian Poland, and also in Lithuania, where the mortality among children was terrible. Yet still parcels of food could be sent to Germany by occupying troops, without deducting from the food-rations of the recipients, and still Germany refused to guarantee—whatever her guarantee might be worth—that foreign relief for the starving Poles should be used for them and not for exportation into Germany.

Trouble was brewing: again in June, 1917, the Council of State passed a resolution that Lithuania should be reunited to Poland, and this was supported by the Inter-Party Club of Warsaw * under the leadership of the National Democrats, in conjunction with Realists, Polish Progressives, Christian Democrats, the National Federation and the Union of Economic Independence, for Germany, by her obstinate refusal to give substance

* The Inter-party Club represents pro-Entente opinion in Poland.

to any of her promises, had done nothing more than consolidate Polish parties together against herself. Support was given to the Polish cause by a further declaration of the Allies, for at a meeting of the Polish National Club in Petrograd, M. Albert Thomas announced in the name of the French Government that they desired "unification independence, strength and greatness of Poland, for the Polish question is a European and an international question." This was in flat contradiction of the declaration of the late Tsar's Government that the Polish question was an internal Russian question, and was a direct allusion to the importance of Poland as a check to the Mittel-Europa policy of Germany. Neither Russia nor the Central Empires had given substance to the promises they had made, and it was clear that if Polish national aspirations were to be satisfied, it must be the Entente to whom Poland had to look. This revulsion of feeling against the occupying powers led to fresh disturbances that broke out in Warsaw, and to the refusal of the large majority, 85 per cent., of the Polish legions to take any oath of allegiance to the Central Powers. On that the mailed fist descended: the Polish soldiers who had refused to take the oath were sent to internment camps, and Pilsudski, who had

been the one hope on whom rested the raising of a Polish army to fight for Germany, was arrested on the charge of conspiracy and imprisoned, upon which the commanders of the Polish legions resigned. Cannons were placed in the streets of Warsaw, thousands of civilians were arrested, and the Governor-General announced that he had authority to burn Warsaw to the ground, in order to show how deeply Germany had at heart the welfare of Poland.

But public opinion in Germany by no means endorsed measures of this kind, which were as unwise as they were tyrannical, and among other papers the *Kolnische Volkszeitung* deplored German maladministration which had made an enemy of the entire country. The state had been formed too late, no king had been appointed, and it was governed by German Jacks-in-office, who could not speak a word of Polish or French. The fact that this was allowed to pass the Censor is an indication of the general disgust in Germany of the military autocracy as applied to a country which had been promised independence. More than six months had passed since that declaration had been made, and there had as yet been no indication that it was endorsed by the faintest sincerity of purpose. According to her usual policy, Germany

had tried to ingratiate herself with the Poles by fomenting their hatred of Russia, but now that tide of suspicion and distrust which she had successfully caused to flow was ebbing strongly back upon herself. Her fair promises had been shown to be shams, and even when she replaced cajolery with tyranny, she was haunted by the sense of imperfect mastery. She had tried to raise an army of volunteers to fight her battles, and had succeeded in getting together but 600 men, and when she made a demand for the forcible recruiting of Poles for the work of munitions and industrial concerns in Germany, the municipality of Warsaw flatly refused to organise any such scheme, and she had been obliged to fall back on a voluntary appeal instead. This proved to be almost as great a *fiasco* as her attempt to raise troops, and only 2,629 volunteers came forward. Neither by conciliation nor compulsion had she attained her aims, and now, when she had been in occupation for two years, she had not succeeded in making the Poles either her slaves or her friends. They would not willingly fight for her or work for her, and she had failed to compel them. She had not solved the Polish problem, and she was perfectly well aware of that humiliating fact. She had satisfied neither herself nor her recalcitrant dependents.

CHAPTER V

(i) THE POLISH LEGIONS

Of the various factors with had produced this crisis by far the most important from the German standpoint was the utter failure to induce Poland to furnish Germany with an army. The German authorities had tried to raise it themselves and had succeeded in enlisting 600 fit men, when they had hoped to raise between 700,000 and 800,000. But they believed that one man was able to raise this army for them, and this was Pilsudski, whom they had now imprisoned, despairing of success, on the charge of conspiracy. He had not conspired at all: he had but consistently refused to conspire or to exercise the huge moral force which he had in Poland, in the matter of raising an army, unless (as we have seen) that army was intended to be the defence and shield of a Polish independent State, which the German authorities, up till the present time had refused to call into existence, or to grant it a Constitution that was anything more than a swin-

dle. A very brief *résumé* of the history of this remarkable patriot, and of the legions which he had created will help the reader to understand how great was the prestige with which the Germans rightly credited him, and how significant to them were the Polish legions which he had raised at the beginning of the war.

Pilsudski was a Lithuanian Pole, and his father, like himself, was a sturdy Polish patriot. As a student in Petrograd he joined the Socialistic movement, and was deported to Siberia. He came back, having escaped from there, in the early nineties, and leaving Russia, became a founder of the Polish Socialist Party, the first that included the struggle for Polish independence in its programme. He spent some years as an emigrant in London, where he published the organ of the Polish Socialist Party. In 1904 he went to Japan, and, unsuccessfully tried to get the assistance of the Japanese Government in organizing an armed rising in Poland against Russia. He returned from there to Russian Poland, where he was the leader of a revolutionary movement, was again arrested and imprisoned at St. Petersburg. Once more he escaped, and settled in Galicia. After the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1909, when Austria was preparing for war against Rus-

sia, he came into contact with the Austrian staff and offered to raise a volunteer legion on their behalf. He began to organize this in 1911, three years before the outbreak of the present war. It consisted mainly of Socialistic emigrants from Russian Poland, many of whom were trained as officers with the help of the Austrian military authorities. When the war broke out, the legion was put on an official basis. Pilsudski was appointed to its command, and both his staff and the rank and file were Polish Socialists, largely young men studying in Galicia, who had come under the influence of Pilsudski's propaganda, but a considerable number of Austrians joined it also.

As a military leader Pilsudski shewed marked ability; politically, his inspiration was his wholehearted hatred of the old Russian regime of Tsarism, and thus owing both to his qualities and their defects he could not analyse the peculiar difficulties of the Polish question generally, or see that Germany was just as strong an opponent of Polish liberty as Russia, and infinitely the more insidious. To this patriotic Pole living in territory grabbed by Russia from the ancient Republic, Russia was the obvious enemy. He had no sympathies for any powers either on the side of the Central Empires or on that of the Entente: his

only motive was to fight the enemies of Poland. Poland was encircled by foes, and it really mattered little to Pilsudski what segment of that circle he originally "went for," provided only that he hurled himself, like a wild cat, at something hostile. He appears to have made up his mind, years before the war, that Russia, anyhow, was a foe to his fatherland, and he rated the proclamation of the Grand Duke Nicholas at precisely its proper value. Indeed it might have been of him, as the incarnation of the Polish national spirit, that a Russian, Professor Bierdiayew, said: "The Poles do not want Russian sympathy and friendship, but their own independence. . . . The Polish question is not and cannot be a Russian problem for them: it is a matter of their own, and at the same time a matter that should concern the whole world. . . . It is more than obvious that for a Pole the future arrangements for Poland cannot be part of the future arrangements of Russia or Germany or Austria. For them there is no Russian or Austrian orientation. They do not want their freedom as a reward from anybody . . . Poland is not in decadence; it is at the height of its vitality and strength. . . . Poles have no Russian or Austrian orientation, only a Polish one. . . ."

Pilsudski was always ready to take the "best chance" for the independence of Poland (as when in 1904 he went to Japan and offered on behalf of the Socialists to organize an armed rising in Poland against Russia) and thus, since Russia at the outbreak of war was the wrongful holder of Lithuania and Poland, he raised the legions to fight against the most conspicuous opponent of Polish independence. Whatever Power, be it Russian or German, was in possession of Poland, that Power was Pilsudski's enemy, and he always "went for" his enemy. This undeviating purpose invariably dictated his course.

As such he was the first to lead troops into Russian territory, and at the opening of the war made a skirmishing advance out of Galicia into Russia on the side of the Austrians. He was recalled, as leading an "irregular body," and in order to regularise that irregular body, the Austrian command found it somehow reasonable to embody him and his legions in their regular army. There they remained till December, 1915, partaking in the Austrian retreat and, subsequently, in its advance. By this time the Germans had taken possession—though largely with Austrian troops—of the territory of the Kingdom of Poland, and had seen the potentiality of Pilsudski

in the way of raising a Polish army, consisting not merely of the legions, who were a body of a very few thousand men, but of a Polish force, consisting, so they hoped, not of a few thousand men, but of at least 700,000, to fight in the interests not of Austria nor of Poland, but of Germany. With this in view Germany managed, without detaching the Polish legions from the Austrian army, to include them in the general advance to the Stokhod front in December, 1915. There they served till the late summer of 1916, when Pilsudski, after constant friction with Bernhardi, who was the German commander of that section, suddenly refused to serve there any more, and, by flat mutiny, withdrew on August 28th a number of his troops from the front and marched them back to Warsaw. That there had been friction between him and Bernhardi there was no doubt, but the reason for his withdrawal of himself and his division was a much more honourable and consistent motive: it was in fact his invariable purpose of fighting the most obvious of Poland's foes that dictated it. For a year now, Germany, and in a minor degree Austria, had been in possession of Poland, and had altogether shelved the question of Polish independence. It was for that alone that Pilsudski cared, and his

mutiny was without doubt due to political motives. At any cost he wanted Polish independence, and he transgressed every code of military discipline in order to provoke a political crisis. Just as, when the Russians were in possession of Poland, he fought against the Russians: so now, when the Germans were in possession, he refused to fight against the Russians. But in each case his motive was perfectly clear: he would not support an enemy of Poland, and his action, doubtless, contributed to induce Germany to declare the independence of Poland.

It says volumes for the value which the Germans attached to him and his influence that he was not instantly shot for this mutiny. But they knew perfectly well that if any one could raise a Polish army for them it was Pilsudski, and instead of shooting him, both of the Central Empires tried to make friends with him. In September, 1916, just after his mutiny and retirement with his troops, it was announced from Vienna (Wiener Korrespondenz Bureau) that the Polish legions were going to be transformed into a Polish Auxiliary Corps. So far from being shot as mutinous they were recognised as the *cadres* of a Polish army, to guard the State which the Central Empires were proposing to create.

Instead of having their badges torn off them and being laid in nameless graves they were given a Polish uniform with the ancient Polish badge of the White Eagle. "They will depend," so ran the official proclamation, "in matters of tactics on the High Command of the armies of the Central Empires, but they will be independent as regards their own organisation, and they will fight in conjunction with the Austro-Hungarian army."

But until the success of this diplomacy was assured the Central Empires thought it wiser that Pilsudski should be in retirement, and for the next month "for the sake of his health" he was inaccessible at Zeleopane, under the guise of a rest cure. That was all the punishment inflicted on him for the rankest mutiny, and while he was "resting" the Polish legions in October, 1916, passed a resolution to do their duty on behalf of an independent Poland and to *stand by Pilsudski*. In fact, the nucleus for a Polish army refused to help the Central Empires in any way until they had got their Pilsudski again. Next month, accordingly (November, 1916) he was rested and reappeared. His mutiny had been completely successful: he had forced the Central Empires to promise to let him form an army of the Polish State. But at that point there broke

across the common path an unbridgeable chasm, for the Germans wanted a Polish army to help Germany, and Pilsudski never contemplated such a thing. If he was to raise a Polish army, that army would be raised for Poland and Poland alone.

On the eve (literally the eve) of the German and Austrian declaration of the "State of Poland," Pilsudski declared in favour of the breaking up of the Polish legions, and of the using of them as *cadres* for the formation of a Polish army. He professed himself able to raise an army of 700,000 men, but this would depend on the nature of the imminent declaration of independence. Here again, now that Germany and Austria were in possession of Poland, he was "up against" the occupying Powers, for they on their side declared that Poland must prove herself worthy of independence, by shedding her blood on behalf of Germany. The legions by the mouth of Pilsudski refused to do anything of the kind. But still Pilsudski was neither interned nor arrested nor shot. The Central Empires considered him as their most valuable asset as a recruiter, if they could only get him to see "eye to eye" with them.

They continued to work at their impracticable project, and in December, 1916, declared Pilsud-

ski as the organiser of the new army, in conjunction with Sikorski, a Polish Colonel who was much more amenable to sweet German influence than his coadjutor. A great inauguration ceremony for the new army was arranged, and on its being handed over at Warsaw in April, 1917, to the Governor, General von Beseler as *cadres* for the new Polish army, von Beseler addressed the troops in the most gratifying terms. He said:—

> "Comrades! I greet you most heartily in the capital of your fatherland, in whose liberation your bravery has assisted. . . . Certainly a Polish army will soon arise from your brave ranks, and this army will defend and guard your country. We are glad that we (sic) are able to fight still further shoulder to shoulder with you. A free Kingdom of Poland! Hurrah!"

Now these were very "handsome expressions" considering that the last act of the Polish legions was to march away without permission from the front at Stokhod, and again this emphasises the enormous importance that Germany attached to the power of Pilsudski. After this warm welcome the ill-starred von Beseler drew up a "Flag-

oath" for the legions and attempted to administer it. By the proposed flag-oath, the Polish soldiers had to swear allegiance, on the Polish colours, to the German Kaiser, their commander-in-chief, and to the Monarchs of the two Central powers as guarantors of the independent Polish state. This is interesting, as it shows that the German orientation had for the present extinguished the Austrian, but from the point of view of the Central Empires it was uninteresting, since Pilsudski and his legions refused by an enormous majority to take any such oath. They were not prepared to promise anything of the sort.

It must be borne in mind, that when the Polish legions were taken over to form the nucleus for an army, they were absolutely unimportant in point of actual numbers. They consisted at this time of three full brigades, i. e. six regiments of infantry, with nine batteries of 8 cm. quick-firing guns, one regiment of cavalry, and complete equipment of wireless, ambulance, doctors, etc. But Germany, quite correctly, saw in them the potentiality of a much larger force. If they, and in especial if their creater Pilsudski, could be brought to see themselves "as others saw them," Germany would get her projected army of 700,000 to 800,000 men fighting for her. But again the in-

superable difficulty was Pilsudski: he had declared himself capable of raising, and without doubt could have raised such a force, *but* (here was the German "but" turned against its originators) there had first to exist a Polish independent state on whose behalf this army was to be raised. Given a satisfactory solution of the Polish question, in other words the creation of a real and independent Poland, Pilsudski would and could have equipped it with a suitable army, for defensive and perhaps offensive purposes of its own. But he was not going to raise, nor were his countrymen going to form part of an army to be used by Germany for her own ends. Then in March, 1917, came the Russian revolution, and to Pilsudski's frank and filibustering mind, the new Russia, since it too was revolutionary and the foe of tyrants, became his spiritual brother, and when the offer was made him to command the Polish army in Russia he did not refuse it, though I cannot find that he accepted it. Upon which, the German authorities, at last despairing of getting him to throw himself into German schemes arrested him for conspiracy. His last public declaration was that Germany had created a Polish state in order to raise a Polish army for herself. He was perfectly right, and if he had said that

she had created a sham state in order to raise a real army, he would have been righter still.

By August, 1917, the Provisional Council of State had ceased to be in any way representative of the Polish nation, for Pilsudski's party which contained all that was truly national in Poland no longer took any part in it. Fresh riots occurred in Warsaw owing to his imprisonment, and another impotent attempt was made on the part of Germany to induce the Polish legions to take the oath of "fraternity of arms" with the Central Powers. Feeling ran equally high in Galicia over Pilsudski's arrest, and in order to justify it von Beseler published the reasons for his imprisonment. These were:

(i) He was the soul and spiritual leader of Polish national sentiment against Germany.

(ii.) He had not declined the offer to command the Polish army in Russia.*

* The subsequent fate of this Polish army in Russia was as follows: The Russian peace and the treaty with the Ukraine completely paralysed its potentialities, for it numbered only about 15,000 men (exaggerated by report to 60,000), and there was no longer any Russian army for them to fight in conjunction with. Their commander, General Musnicki, therefore signed a treaty with Germany, by which the duties assigned to them were to de-

The publication of this did not have the effect of calming public feeling, it only enshrined Pilsudski in the hearts of patriots. Then, since it did not serve its purpose, Germany resorted to directer measures of repression, and immediately afterwards she announced that the Polish auxiliary corps, instead of preserving the slightest appearance of independence, as the nucleus for a national force, should be placed under Austrian command. The effect of this was that the National Council resigned in a body.

(ii) Further "Independence" of Poland

Chaos was now complete, and probably Germany intended that, for she was intending to "scrap" the constitution which she has proclaimed nearly a year before, since it had not produced for her that for which she had granted it, namely an army to fight her battles. In this year she had but succeeded in fusing the whole Polish population of the occupied territory into enmity against her,

fend certain territories between the Dneiper and Mohileff from Bolshevik lawlessness. Germany, in fact, recognised his army as a neutral army. This was rather a melancholy conclusion, but it is difficult to see what else General Musnicki could have done. In any case, the Bolsheviks were no less a danger to Poland than to Russia or Germany, and the solution was probably the best possible.

and since they were now declared foes, she proceeded to treat them as such. She had openly become a tyrant over a conquered people: she had imprisoned the man who voiced national sentiment, she had tried to raise troops of another nation to fight for her, and now she proceeded to any sort of petty tyranny that suited her convenience. She demanded that German schools in Poland, the management of which had in April been entrusted to Poles, should now be directly controlled from Berlin, and in spite of her having given matters dealing with education and justice into the care of the Council of State, she closed Polish schools and opened new German ones. All matters connected with education and administration of justice were, for the future, to be dictated by German military control, and she ordained that the Governor-General might demand re-examination of the legitimacy of decisions in law-courts (so that if an anti-German verdict was returned, it could be revised); she reserved also to the Governor-General the right of approval or reversal of any measures passed by the country's representatives, in so far as they affected "war-conditions," and again banished or imprisoned Polish students. Finally she directly threatened to annex such part of Poland as she

needed for rectification of her frontier, leaving Austria to annex the remainder. The immediate effect of this would be to render all Poles liable to military service either with her or with Austria. As a protest against this which was a frank and open repartition of the Poland she had declared independent, the Austrian Polish Socialists, the peasant party and the National Democrats in the Reichsrat formed a *bloc* to demand an independent Poland with access to the sea. Austria remonstrated with her partner, and together they settled to drop the final adjustment of Poland, at any rate till the end of the war, scrapped the declaration of November 5th, 1916, and proceeded to announce a new system of government. This was not done without strong and expressed warnings from Germany itself, and among others Prince Lichnowsky declared in the *Berliner Tageblatt* that the Polish question constituted for Germany the gravest question of the war, far graver than that of Belgium or Alsace, and that she was playing with it in the manner of a child with a toy that would not work. He was quite right, for while Germany by these tyrannies was acquiring material advantages for the Mittel-Europa policy in the way of expansion

Eastwards, she was also building up against that expansion a solid wall of hate and antagonism.

The patent for this new constitution appeared in the middle of September, 1917, and appointed:

(i.) A Regency Council of three members to be nominated by the two Emperors of the Central Powers.

(ii.) An administrative Cabinet under the Presidency of the Prime Minister, who was to be appointed by the Regency Council.

(iii.) A representative Parliament.

The names of the Regency Council appeared by the end of the month, and consisted of Prince Lubomirski, Archbishop Kakowski and M. Ostrowski. These were to hold office until the appointment of a Regent was made, and since they were appointed by the Central Empires, and in turn appointed a Premier, it can be conjectured that Poland was not intended to gain much measure of true autonomy, for Germany's hand was still on the throttle, to prevent any real development of horse-power.

Of the three, Prince Lubomirski is the predominant personality: He is a very able man, aristo-

cratic and of Liberal tendencies. He has enjoyed considerable popularity since the occupation of the country, first as chairman of the Citizens' Committee, and as President of Warsaw, and throughout has shewn great firmness and dignity in his dealings with the German authorities. M. Ostrowski is a wealthy landowner, who has worked with the group of Polish conservatives for a reconciliation with Russia. He has had more political experience than Lubomirski but lacks his ability, and is the victim of a strange nervous disease that causes him to fall asleep for several weeks at a time. His power of application to business therefore, is not particularly valuable to anybody. Archbishop Kakowski is a man of common-sense but of narrow horizons who has no qualifications for a post of political authority. His appointment, as a Roman Catholic prelate, is chiefly interesting as an indication of a certain swaying of the balance again towards an Austrian solution which presently became a more pronounced movement. For some weeks after the appointment of this Council the post of the Prime Minister was vacant, for the Germans vetoed Count Tarnowski, the Austrian candidate, and it was not until the middle of November that M. Jan Kucharzewski was appointed, a man of ability and

honesty but without much strength or decision, and a student of history rather than a maker of it.

The swing of the pendulum, indicated by the *personnel* of the Regency council, towards some form of Austrian solution soon grew more marked, and it was understood that the Crown Council held in Berlin in November favoured the idea of the union of Poland and Galicia under the Emperor of Austria, while by way of adjusting the balance Courland and Lithuania would be annexed by Germany. But though this scheme would be manifestly to the advantage of Germany, since German influence would increase in the Reichsrat now that Polish deputies would no longer sit there but in the Diet of their new state, there were two vital objections to it which aroused the opposition of the entire German press. One was that such annexation was definitely contradictory to the "no-annexation" doctrine officially proposed, the other that to take over Lithuania and Courland would be to incur the bitter and lasting enmity of Russia. Russia might be at present an almost non-existent factor in international politics (and was soon to advance nearer vanishing point) but no sane politician could base his schemes on the impossible premise of her total and permanent extinction. A third objection, one, however, to

which Germany attached no weight whatever, was that the Little Russians (Ukrainians) who formed by far the largest national body in East Galicia would fight to the last gasp before being united with, and governed by a Polish state. Indeed this consideration, so far from being an objection in Germany's view, constituted an argument in favour of this arrangement, since there would thus be bitter hostility between Ukrainians and Poles. Meantime the Polish Club in Vienna were strongly in favour of the Austrian solution, and it had many adherents among the Conservative Poles of Galicia, while Count Julius Audrassy writing semi-officially in the *Fremden Blatt* in December, 1917, declared for it saying that Posen was inalienable from Germany, but that Galicia formed a natural adjunct to the Kingdom of Poland. Equally significant as to the fact that some form of "Austrian solution" though often rejected by Germany, was on the tapis again, was that Kucharzewski speaking of the reception of the Regency Council by the Emperor of Austria, in January, 1918, said that the union of Galicia and Poland was a heart-felt desire of the whole Polish nation. This statement followed immediately on a visit he had paid to Berlin, and was, if not authorized, allowed to remain uncontradicted.

There were certainly more elements in this new constitution of a self-governing state than in any which Germany had yet permitted to take shape. Hitherto her main use for Poland had been that Poland should supply her with an army against Russia, and up till now she had declared that Poland must establish her claim for independence by shedding her blood for Germany. But now, in the swift disintegration of Russia there was no longer any need for a Germano-Polish army, and so she could be advanced a step towards independence and create an army for herself. Germany by no means wished to have a rebellious and discontented province in her sphere of occupation, though in days gone by, she would sooner have been supplied with such an army as Pilsudski could have raised for her than satisfy the aspirations of the Poles. But now at last she consented, as an experiment, to Poland devoting herself to her own coherence and stability, when suddenly all was turmoil again, and the rights and territorial integrity granted to Poland were violated more wantonly than ever before. For in February, 1918, there took place the peace-negotiations with Russia at Brest-Litovsk in which Poland claimed a voice, which was not granted her, and the Polish government thereupon stated

that no agreement bearing on Poland's fate or prejudicing her rights would be accepted by the nation as legally binding. Then followed the Ukrainian peace, which sheared off the entire Government of Cholm, hitherto Polish, and gave it to the Ukraine, thereby making a fresh partition which went a step further than even the Congress of Vienna had done, for it cut off 10,000 square miles of territory from the Kingdom of Poland (by way of granting it independence) and created, if it was allowed to stand, a lasting fratricidal contest between Poland and the Ukraine.

The Austrian Poles retorted by a vigorous and successful move, supported by the Czechs, who opposed a treaty which sowed discord between Slav peoples. The whole of the Polish Club in the Reichsrat under Baron von Goetz went over to the opposition and threatened to vote not only against the Budget, but against the Provisional budget about to be laid before the House; they also issued a unanimous manifesto demanding the presence of Polish representatives in the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, while in Poland itself the whole Polish Cabinet with Kuckarzewski resigned. In the Reichsrat Glombinski, a Polish deputy, asserted the proclaimed independence of Poland and its right, as independent, to make its

treaties, when they concerned its frontiers, with any other country, while Goluckowski read a similar manifesto in the upper house. Similarly M. Daszynski a Polish Member of the Reichsrat issued an appeal to Austrian Poles on February 18th, saying:

> "The soil of Cholm and Podlasie has belonged to Poland for centuries; both territories are Poland's children, consecrated by the blood of her martyrdom. . . . Now it seems that this land is to serve as a bridge for German soldiers and goods on their march to Eastern Europe, to the Black Sea and the Caucasus. And the Poles, bereft of every individual connection with the East, are to be plunged into deadly conflict with the Ukraine."

This is a peculiarly interesting document, as shewing that the Mittel-Europa aims of Germany were appreciated by the Poles, and also that they grasped the second reason of this seizure of Polish territory, namely the German design to produce enmity between the Ukraine and Poland, according to Germany's invariable policy.

Simultaneously the Poles received the official support of the British government to their protest, for it was announced in the *Gazetta Narodowa* of February 29th, that Count Sobanski, the recognised representative of the Polish National Committee in London had received official information from the Foreign Office that the British diplomatic agent in Kiev had been instructed to declare that England did not recognise the peace concluded between the Ukraine and the Central Empires, and would not recognise any peace with regard to which the interested Poles had not been consulted.

This action of the Austrian Poles produced the desired effect, and the Central Powers under pressure this time from Austria, said they would reconsider the cession of Cholm to the Ukraine, and promised a mixed commission to decide on its fate with due regard to the wishes of its population. What conclusions the "mixed commission" will come to still remains to be seen. Kuhlmann on behalf of Germany hinted at the possibility of the new Polish frontier being moved eastwards instead of westwards, and simultaneously at Brest-Litovsk, Count Czernin announced that he would welcome Polish representatives at

the negotiations. He declared that in his view Poland was an independent state, and that he desired the attachment of it to Austria, only if it was voluntary. The German press incidentally, bewailed the continued ingratitude of Poland, and the Union of German National Parties declared that German blood had been freely shed *to secure the independence of Poland.* Comment would be impertinent: we must only bow the head in reverence to the newly-discovered fact that one of Germany's objects in the war was the independence of Poland. Nobody had guessed that!

Such in brief up till the end of February, 1918, is the history of Poland under German and Austrian occupation. Famine still reigns there, and though Austria in the autumn of 1917, made some attempt to alleviate it by starting an Agricultural Institute at Pulawy and granting supplies of grain and seed, Germany has limited herself to developing a market for her own trade, with branches at Warsaw, Lodz, Kalish, Grodno, Vilna, etc. She has also discovered coal-fields which she is working for her own consumption, and metallic deposits of tin and copper in the government of Kielce.

Finally in December, 1917, what remained of the Polish legions (Pilsudski being still interned at Magdeburg) was sent, officers and men, to Galicia to join the Polish Relief Corps. Their final extinction occurred in March, 1918, when three regiments stationed in Bukovina mutinied, and two crossed the frontier to join the Polish army corps in the Ukraine, and the third was nearly annihilated in a fierce battle with the Austrians. Some remnants escaped and have now arrived in France, where to-day they are fighting on the Western front. Among them is General Haler, who was in command of the 2nd Brigade of the Polish legions when first they marched against Russia in 1914.

In a word, since Germany and Austria have occupied Poland, they have ruled it merely by the momentary whims of a tyrannical despotism, promising it independence one day and fulfilling that promise by creating a sham administration, and tumbling that down the next day to make way for another cardboard constitution to meet the exigencies of some temporary crisis, and to mark time until they should agree between themselves what to do with the country. For cynical indiffer-

ence to the desire and to the sufferings of its inhabitants, and to their own promises, the rule of the Central Empires has created a new record which is likely to remain long unchallengd.

Note.—According to the latest news, it is reported that the Central Powers have come to an agreement about Poland, by which certain districts (Dombrova, Kalisch, and perhaps the Narev territory) will be retained by Germany, who will also have complete control over Lithuania, Courland and the Ukraine. Austria will obtain the rest of Poland, which she will incorporate with Galicia. Probably nothing definite has been arrived at, but there clearly is in the air a compromise which grants the Austrian solution with the counterweight that part of Poland shall be German. This will mean that the "independence" promised to Poland by the Central Empires will merely end in a fresh partition. The Ukrainians of Eastern Galicia will, according to this arrangement, be under Polish rule, in order, as suggested above, to keep up a permanent estrangement and hostility between them and the Poles. Should such an arrange-

English Miles
0 50 100 150 200
Kilomètres
0 100 200 300
BALTIC SEA
Bay of Dantzig
Dantzig
Koenigsberg
ERMELAND
Allenstein
ROYAL PRUSSIA
BRANDENBURG
BERLIN
Posen
R. Warta
R. Vistula
Plock
Lomza
WARSAW
R. Bug
Kalisch
Lodz
Pulawy
Kielce
Cracow
R. Vistula
Tarnov
Teschen
Przemysl
R. Elbe
R. Oder
BOHEMIA
MORAVIA
CARPATHIAN
VIENNA
R. Danube
R. Theiss
GERMANS
HUNGARY
MAGYARS
GERMANS
PRUSSIA
POLES
BEFO
POLACHIA
CZECHOSLOVAKS
AUSTRIA

ETHNOGRAPHICAL
MAP OF
POLAND
LIVONIANS
Pskov
Riga
R
ANIANS
R. Dvina
W H I T E
U
Vitebsk
Smolensk
Kovno
Vilna
R U S S I A N S
T H U A N I A
Minsk
Mohilev
S
R. Dnieper
R. Desna
A N D
st Litovsk
R. Pripet
Kursk
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S
Chernigov
V O L H Y N I A
Kief
I T T L E R U S S I A N S
Zhitomir
Poltava
U K R A I N E
R. Dnieper
A
R. Bug
R. Dniester
R. Pruth
MANIANS
OTTOMAN EMPIRE

NORWAY
KRISTIANIA
SWEDEN
STOCKHOLM
FINLA
THE BRITISH ISLES
NORTH SEA
DENMARK
COPENHAGEN
BALTIC SEA
Riga
LITHUANI
R. Niemen
Vil
R
LONDON
AMSTERDAM
The Hague
HOLLAND
Hamburg
R. Elbe
HANOVER
BERLIN
Dantzig
R. Vistula
WARSAW
POLAND
Brest
Cholm
Calais
BELGIUM
BRUSSELS
R. Rhine
GERMANY
R. Seine
PARIS
BOHEMIA
MORAVIA
GALICIA
BAY OF BISCAY
FRANCE
BAVARIA
R. Danube
VIENNA
BUDAPEST
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Trieste
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SPAIN
MADRID
Marseille
CORSICA
ITALY
ADRIATIC SEA
HERZEGOVINA
MONTENEGRO
ALBANIA
ROME
SARDINIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ALGIERS
TUNIS
SICILY
ALGERIA
MALTA
TRIPOLI
ITALIAN LIBYA
English Miles
100 200 300 400
Kilometres
200 400 600

SOUTHERN EUROPE
Vologda
ETROGRAD
Kazan
R. Volga
MOSCOW
Samara
Orenburg
R. Ural
Saratov
Mohilev
U S S I A
ARAL SEA
R. Volga
KIEF
R. Dnieper
R. Don
Astrakhan
R A I N E
CASPIAN SEA
SEA OF AZOV
Odessa
CAUCASUS
CRIMEA
Baku
TIFLIS
Constanza
BLACK SEA
Batum
Trebizond
Varna
Bosporus
ARMENIA
TEHERAN
CONSTANTINOPLE
S. of MARM.
ASIA
U R K E Y
PERSIA
Dardanelles
MINOR
Mosul
R. Tigris
Konia
Adana
MESOPOTAMIA
Bagdad
Hit.
R. Euphrates
PERSIAN GULF
CYPRUS
SYRIA
SEA
PALESTINE
Jerusalem
Port Said
ARABIA
Alexandria
SUEZ CANAL
CAIRO
R. Nile
EGYPT
RED SEA

ment be confirmed, it will probably imply the appointment of the Arch-Duke Charles Stephen as Regent of that part of Poland which falls to the Austrian Crown.

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